WORKERS VANGUARD

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WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 1015

11 January 2013

After Newtown Massacre

Bourgeois Hypocrisy and Gun Control Schemes

Coming on the heels of the July 2012 killing of 12 moviegoers in Aurora, Colorado, the slaughter at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, by a deranged individual last month has predictably led to renewed calls for a further clampdown on gun ownership in the U.S. With President Obama intoning that there "can't be an excuse for inaction," the *New York Times* (19 December) called to restore and strengthen the ban on assault weapons that expired in 2004. On January 3, the first day of the new Congress, ten gun control bills were introduced. The measures would ban possession or transfer of high-capacity ammunition magazines and mandate a national database of those prohibited from buying firearms as well as background checks on firearms transactions at gun shows, among other things.

Just as reactionary "law and order" forces point to particularly heinous murders in pushing for greater application of the barbaric, racist death penalty, so do bourgeois liberals jump on killing sprees like those at Virginia Tech and now Newtown to urge ever-tighter restrictions or outright bans on gun ownership. The result in all these cases is that the population's basic rights are trampled on and the capitalist state further consolidates and expands its murderous repressive powers.

Only sociopaths would deny the horror that took place in Newtown. But what is at stake now is a renewed drive by the capitalist state to enforce a monopoly of violence in its hands by further eviscerating the right to bear arms, which is codified in the Second Amendment to the Constitution. Marxists oppose gun control laws and uphold the right to armed self-defense, a necessity for the working class, black people, other minorities and the populace as a whole.

A *New York Times* (17 December) editorial titled "Reason to Hope After the Newtown Rampage" offered up the population as more than willing to voluntarily surrender its rights, proclaiming: "Americans are ready to shoulder burdens—as we did after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks by accepting increased security when we travel and military actions we might previously have avoided." That's what they say. President Obama continued his drive to "increase security" on January 3 by signing the latest National Defense Authorization Act—the annual military appropriations bill—which allows the indefinite detention of U.S. citizens.

The right to bear arms was born of the American Revolution and its predecessor in England the previous century. Throughout the bourgeois revolutions in Europe and North America from the 17th through the mid 19th centuries, the principle of arming the people, including the concept of the people's militia, was seen as constituting a vital defense against tyranny. But as we noted in "The Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution" (see page 8): "With the appearance of the proletariat as an independent actor on the scene, 'the armed people' became archaic as the population was polarized along class lines."

Getty

At December 16 memorial service for victims of Newtown massacre, Obama seizes opportunity to declare that there is no "excuse for inaction" on gun control.

Despotic regimes prefer to rule over defenseless subjects; an armed people can fight back. For black people, armed self-defense and other basic rights were won with the Civil War that smashed slavery—and soon thereafter came under attack. In the struggle to build and defend unions, from the West Virginia and Kentucky coalfields to the nation's docks and trucking hubs, workers armed themselves against strikebreaking scabs and the police, military and private security outfits. Following World War II and the Korean War, black vets, arms in hand, formed the foot soldiers for the early struggles against Jim Crow segregation in the South.

The people who decide who will be given the privilege to exercise the right to bear arms happen to be the greatest mass murderers the world has seen—the U.S. capitalist class. Even as Obama declared in Newtown that "these tragedies must end," his military and spy apparatus was preparing the next round of drone attacks in Pakistan and Yemen. In a commentary titled "Beyond Newtown," class-war prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal observed: "Across America, cities from coast to coast and in the Midwest experience small, silent, almost invisible massacres where dozens of parents lose their children; wives lose their husbands; and some husbands lose their wives. I speak of the plague of police violence against blacks in New York, in Chicago, in Oakland and beyond."

For some time, class and other social struggle in this country has been in a trough. Nevertheless, there is enormous social discontent that prepares the ground for renewed struggle. Americans have guns and want to keep them. This is a sociological fact of life, and will be a useful fact when the mass of the population feels immediately and overtly threatened by a tyrannical government. For revolutionary Marxists, what is crucial is that the working class emerge as the champion of all those under the heel of the capitalist rulers.

The Capitalist State: Bearing Arms Against the People

Sheer hypocrisy has always marked calls for gun control emanating from the bourgeoisie. The now-deceased head of the Sulzberger clan, which owns the *New York Times* and is among the leading exponents of gun control for the masses, was known for keeping a gun in his desk to deal with potential hostile intruders. NYC mayor Michael Bloomberg certainly has no reason to fear state seizure of weapons: he has an around-the-clock personal police detail at his disposal.

Much fun has been made of recent pronouncements by the rather ossified National Rifle Association (NRA), particularly the speech by its president in which he raised the reactionary call to place armed security guards in all schools. Pupils in some one-third of the country's public schools are already subject to searches and harassment by armed security guards and even cops, particularly in the ghettos and barrios. We would note that the NRA is currently providing the useful service of training teachers in

continued on page 9

AP

Corbis

Gun control means trigger-happy cops have monopoly on arms. Left: Police search vehicles for guns at funeral in black South Side Chicago, December 4. Right: Los Angeles mayor Antonio Villaraigosa with cops at press conference for gun buyback program, December 27.

Civil War, Not Compromise, Smashed Slavery — Lincoln: A Review...4

San Francisco Cop Vendetta Against Protesters

Defend the ACAC 19! Drop All Charges Now!

OAKLAND—One of the defense cases highlighted at last month's benefit for the annual Partisan Defense Committee Holiday Appeal for class-war prisoners was that of the ACAC 19. These 19 protesters were arrested on October 6 when San Francisco cops brutally attacked a march of nearly 200, part of a series of "Anti-Colonial, Anti-Capitalist" (ACAC) events. The march was called to protest the racist treatment of native peoples, the military's Fleet Week and the war in Afghanistan. Videos show dozens of cops suddenly charging the march before it got more than a few blocks, beating demonstrators to the pavement and inflicting injuries that included a broken nose, deep facial cuts requiring stitches and multiple bruises. Initially hit with felony charges, the ACAC 19 now face vindictive prosecution for a range of trumped-up misdemeanor charges. *Drop all the charges now!*

One of the organizers of the October 6 demonstration singled out for special attention by the cops is Robbie Donohoe, a member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 6 in San Francisco. Speaking at the Oakland Holiday Appeal, brother Donohoe graphically described the police assault:

> "I turned and looked and I saw a baton hit my wife across the back, and I saw her back arch. And I was compelled—instead of trying to get to safety, I ran over and sort of flanked her with my body, and on the way there faced a fine of batons coming down on me. And they eventually knocked us both over and continued to beat us both with batons as I lay on top of her. They kicked me off of her. Three officers were on my back. One of them pulled my head to the side so that I could see her lying next to me as another officer was punching her in the back of the head."

On November 13, the SF district attorney subpoenaed Twitter account information of two protesters, ominously claiming "a conspiracy or agreement to stage a riot." In a December 22 protest letter to the D.A., the PDC declared: "Occurring in the context of a nationwide increase in government surveillance and repression of leftist and labor activists, the District Attorney's demand that Twitter turn over protesters' account records is a direct threat to the right to political dissent, including the elementary rights of free speech and assembly." *Stop SFPD surveillance and harassment of the ACAC 19!*

The Obama administration has systematically escalated the attacks on democratic rights unleashed by his Republican predecessor under the so-called "war on terror." As the Spartacist League and PDC have always warned, although its initial targets were Arabs and Muslims, the "war on terror" has put in place an arsenal of repressive measures that would also be used against leftists, trade unionists and working people. Such attacks have become increasingly frequent and widespread.

Steve Rhodes

Cops descend on "Anti-Colonial, Anti-Capitalist" protesters in San Francisco, October 6.

In the Midwest, 23 leftists and trade unionists subpoenaed by a witchhunting federal grand jury in Chicago following 2010 FBI raids on their homes are still under investigation for supposed "material support to terrorism." The "NATO 5," arrested last year on trumped-up "terror plot" charges around the protests against NATO war criminals in Chicago, remain in jail and face up to 40 years if convicted. Four Occupy Cleveland supporters were sentenced in November to prison terms ranging from six to eleven and a half years for a "plot" concocted by an FBI informant. Three Portland activists are locked away in prison, possibly until 2014, for courageously refusing to testify before a federal grand jury in Seattle investigating a May Day demonstration last year.

Documents obtained last month by the Partnership for Civil Justice Fund reveal that the FBI, in coordination with the New York Stock Exchange, began tracking activists involved with planning Occupy Wall Street a month before the occupation of Zuccotti Park in Manhattan. In cities across the country, the Feds along with local and state police monitored the Occupy movement as a potential terrorist threat.

Immediately after the arrests of the ACAC 19, the police and capitalist media launched a smear campaign, painting the demonstrators as "members of a criminal street gang, Black Blok." An SFPD spokesman circulated the baseless claim that the ACAC demonstrators were the same "anarchist group" that had "vandalized" the Mission District police station in a protest against the shooting of a young Latino man by plainclothes gang squad cops weeks earlier. Gang squad cops were among those who attacked the ACAC march, and arrestees were stripped and inspected for "gang tattoos." This gang squad is the same unit that uses the "gang affiliation" label as carte blanche to terrorize black and Latino youth in San Francisco, including gunning them down in the streets.

Clearly intending to provoke further retaliation against the ACAC 19, the police

continued on page 11

TROTSKY

LENIN

For the Communism of Lenin, Liebknecht and Luxemburg!

Upholding communist tradition, this month we honor Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin, who died in January 1924, and Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, founding leaders of the German Communist Party who were assassinated in January 1919. The military reactionaries who murdered Liebknecht and Luxemburg were acting under the auspices of the government led by the Social Democratic Party, which had already definitively betrayed the proletariat by supporting German imperialism in World War I. We publish below excerpts from Luxemburg's tribute to the Russian Revolution and its Bolshevik leadership.

Only a party which knows how to lead, that is, to advance things, wins support in stormy times. The determination with which, at the decisive moment, Lenin and his comrades offered the only solution which could advance things ("all power in the hands of the proletariat and peasantry"), transformed them almost overnight from a persecuted, slandered, outlawed minority whose leader had to hide like Marat in cellars, into the absolute master of the situation.

Moreover, the Bolsheviks immediately set as the aim of this seizure of power a complete, far-reaching revolutionary program: not the safeguarding of bourgeois democracy, but a dictatorship of the proletariat for the purpose of realizing socialism. Thereby they won for themselves the imperishable historic distinction of having for the first time proclaimed the final aim of socialism as the direct program of practical politics.

Whatever a party could offer of courage, revolutionary far-sightedness and consistency in an historic hour, Lenin, Trotsky and the other comrades have given in good measure. All the revolutionary honor and capacity which western Social-Democracy lacked was represented by the Bolsheviks. Their October uprising was not only the actual salvation of the Russian Revolution; it was also the salvation of the honor of international socialism.

—Rosa Luxemburg, "The Russian Revolution" (September 1918)

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Letter

On Marx, Maximilian and Mexico

The following letter was addressed to Jacob Zorn regarding an article based on his forum presentation, "Mexican-American War: Prelude to American Civil War" (WV Nos. 933 and 934, 27 March and 10 April 2009), which is reprinted in the most recent issue of Black History and the Class Struggle *(July 2012).*

10 August 2012

I followed closely your Mexican-American War article in "Black History and the Class Struggle, No. 22." I did so because I am a Texan and a former newspaper correspondent in Mexico. I was anxious to know what SL had to say: the group does impressive historical research.

For years I have argued that the Texas revolution was a pro-slavery uprising, and also that U.S. imperialism dates to the Mexican war. Your article convinced me that maybe the U.S. wasn't ready for imperialism at the time.

However, I have long believed that Marx sided with Maximilian's invasion of Mexico, writing words to the effect that it would "drag Mexico into the modern world." I read that many years ago in a Mexican publication. But you didn't mention that.

I thought it important since Maximilian's invasion postdates 1854, the date you cite as that of Marx's last defense of the Mexican War. So I looked in my "Collected Works" set—and found nothing of the kind.

Either I was misled about Marx's view of Maximilian or you overlooked something. Can you tell me which it was? If I'm in error, I don't want to continue.

If you are familiar with any sources on Marx/Maximilian/Juarez, I'd also like to know.

Yours,
D.R.

***WV* replies:**

Everything we have read by Karl Marx and/or Friedrich Engels opposes the French incursion into Mexico, which set up the

continued on page 7

Playing by the Bosses' Laws—A Losing Game

Longshore Unions Under the Gun

Heading into the last week of December, the nearly 15,000 members of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) on the East Coast were poised to wage their first Maine-to-Texas strike in 35 years. On the West Coast, some 3,000 members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) in the Pacific Northwest locals voted down by a resounding 93.8 percent the "last, best and final" contract offer by grain export companies. Amid the union-busting devastation that has reduced industrial unions in this country to a mere shadow of their former strength, the two longshore unions are among the few remaining bastions of the power of organized labor.

A battle that brought both unions out on strike could have galvanized workers across the U.S. against the wholesale war on their jobs, wages, working conditions and very means of survival. But this potential has for now, once again, been squandered by the labor misleaders' allegiance to the Democratic Party and prostration before the anti-labor laws and strikebreaking forces of the bosses and their government.

Wojahn/The Oregonian

Portland, Oregon, October 22: Ship at grain terminal operated by one of the companies forcing longshoremen to work under terms of contract that ILWU membership overwhelmingly rejected.

Two days before the December 30 strike deadline for the ILA, a federal mediator announced that the union tops and the employers' United States Maritime Alliance (USMX) had agreed to extend the contract until January 28 (since extended to February 6). On the West Coast, the ILWU International submitted to the grain companies' ultimatum that longshoremen work under the terms of the contract that they had just overwhelmingly rejected or be replaced by scab labor. While announcing that they would be "reviewing" the companies' latest dictates, the ILWU bureaucrats lamented that the bosses "have not bargained in good faith."

ILWU Coast Committeeman and co-chair of its grain negotiating team, Leal Sundet, had earlier described the union's counteroffer as one that "equalizes the playing field on all points that matter." Sundet went on to complain in protectionist terms that "foreign-based grain merchants intend to risk the U.S. export market to try to break the union." Far from putting U.S. grain exports at risk, increasing the rate of exploitation of labor (and hence profits) by trying to break the back of the ILWU is in the interests of all the conglomerates—only some of them foreign-based—that control the international grain trade. The grain goliaths who own the Northwest terminals are now literally making a killing, using drought conditions to drive up grain prices, threatening even greater starvation for peoples around the globe.

On the East Coast, the ILA leadership has similarly sung a patriotic tune, tying the workers' interests to those of American capitalism. This is the second time they have pulled the plug on possible strike action. The original contract deadline was September 30, which coincided then with the expiration of the ILWU's master grain agreement in the Pacific Northwest. Only two weeks earlier, the two unions had announced the formation of a Maritime Labor Alliance together with four other smaller unions with the purported purpose of having each other's backs. But higher loyalties prevailed, and in the words of ILA president Harold Daggett, he extended the contract "for the good of our Country and Our President." Indeed, and it wasn't different this time around.

Giant retailers like Walmart and others were breathing down Obama's neck, demanding that he invoke the Taft-Hartley slave labor law to stop the ILA from striking. But the president was saved the trouble by his allies in the labor bureaucracy lest his intervention damage their lie that the Democrats, who no less than the Republicans represent the capitalists' interests, are the "friends of labor." As reported in the *Wall Street Journal* online (28 December): "The contract extension is a relief for the White House, now negotiating with Congress about 2013 income tax rates and federal spending and borrowing limits. A ports strike could have loaded new worries on an already fragile economic recovery." That is, the profits of the shipping companies and retail giants were rescued while the working class and poor face being pushed off the "fiscal cliff" into further misery and destitution.

The Bosses' Rule Book

The federal mediator heralded the agreement "in principle" between the ILA and USMX over container royalties. Beginning in the 1960s, the ILA leadership accepted a deal in which jobs were sacrificed in exchange for royalty payments based on container cargo tonnage. Having decimated the workforce (which went from 35,000 in the 1960s to 3,500 today at the Port of New York and New Jersey alone), the shipping outfits are out to ultimately eliminate this compensation. Yet to be resolved are USMX's demands for sweeping changes in work rules and manning scales.

On the West Coast, the contract being imposed by the grain exporters is a frontal assault on union work rules and safety conditions, gains which were won over decades in the struggles and at the cost of the very lives of longshoremen in this dangerous industry. As part of this package, the bosses are also aiming to undermine the union hiring hall—the key gain of the 1934 West Coast longshore strike that forged the union—by allowing the companies to approve which ILWU members can be dispatched to work in their terminals. These conditions are modeled on the deal made with the Export Grain Terminal (EGT) consortium in Longview, Washington, last year.

Longshore workers and their allies fought a bitter battle with EGT, whose aim was to drive the ILWU out of its new, high-tech terminal in Longview and replace it with scab labor. They didn't succeed in this. But as we wrote in "Grain Export Bosses Gunning for ILWU" (*WV* No. 1010, 12 October 2012): "In preserving jobs it has held for over 80 years in Longview and its coastwide organization, the ILWU lived to fight another day. But fight it must, or the EGT contract will become the standard for the ILWU's bulk grain handling work in the region." But rather than preparing the ranks and their allies for battle, to date the only "forces" the ILWU International has called out are the union's lawyers.

Playing an elaborate game of legal machinations, they are trying to wield to the union's advantage the very anti-labor laws and agencies, like the NLRB, which came down with strikebreaking injunctions and lawsuits against the union in Longview. The union membership has overwhelmingly been left in the dark and is understandably fearful of what potentially lies in wait. Meanwhile, the grain bosses were mobilizing their forces for all-out war against the ILWU.

An advance team of professional strikebreakers from the Delaware-based J.R. Gettier and Associates has been on the scene for months. As the deadline for the union vote on the contract drew near, hotel rooms in the area were filled with scabs. On the Willamette River, three tugboats manned by strikebreakers and protected by armed guards were moored near the Portland ILWU Local 8 union hall. Their purpose was to ensure that grain ships were taken in and out of the docks. Behind them, the big guns of the capitalist state were mobilized by the Obama administration, with the Coast Guard deployed to create "safety buffer zones" to prevent the union from stopping ships carrying scab grain. While the ILA was not facing anywhere near such a strikebreaking armada, according to the industry mouthpiece, the *Journal of Commerce* (28 December), USMX had been discussing countering a strike, which the union had announced would cover only commercial container shipping, with a lockout of all ILA members including auto and breakbulk work as well.

Better to Fight on Your Feet Than Die on Your Knees

There is no question of the stakes faced by the longshore unions, particularly now the ILWU. But one thing is for sure: playing by the bosses' laws is a losing game. The whole reason these laws exist is to outlaw labor from mobilizing its social power based on its collective strength to stop the flow of goods and shut down production. But this truth is obfuscated by the bureaucrats. Instead, they have whipped up fear that if the union goes on strike, the law would permit the companies to permanently hire the scabs. By these lights, it is better to accept a company lockout that supposedly precludes such a union-busting outcome.

It's not the bosses' laws, but the relative strength and determination of the opposing forces that decide who wins and who loses in any strike, as in any conflict. By working the rejected contract terms, the ILWU is creating "facts on the ground" that will be harder to reverse.

As we wrote some 30 years ago in the wake of the union-busting juggernaut that was launched with the 1981 destruction of the PATCO air traffic controllers union:

> "The future of the unions is on the line. And while the capitalists are grabbing every gun in their closet, the union bureaucracy is handcuffing the workers with the bosses' laws.... No decisive gain

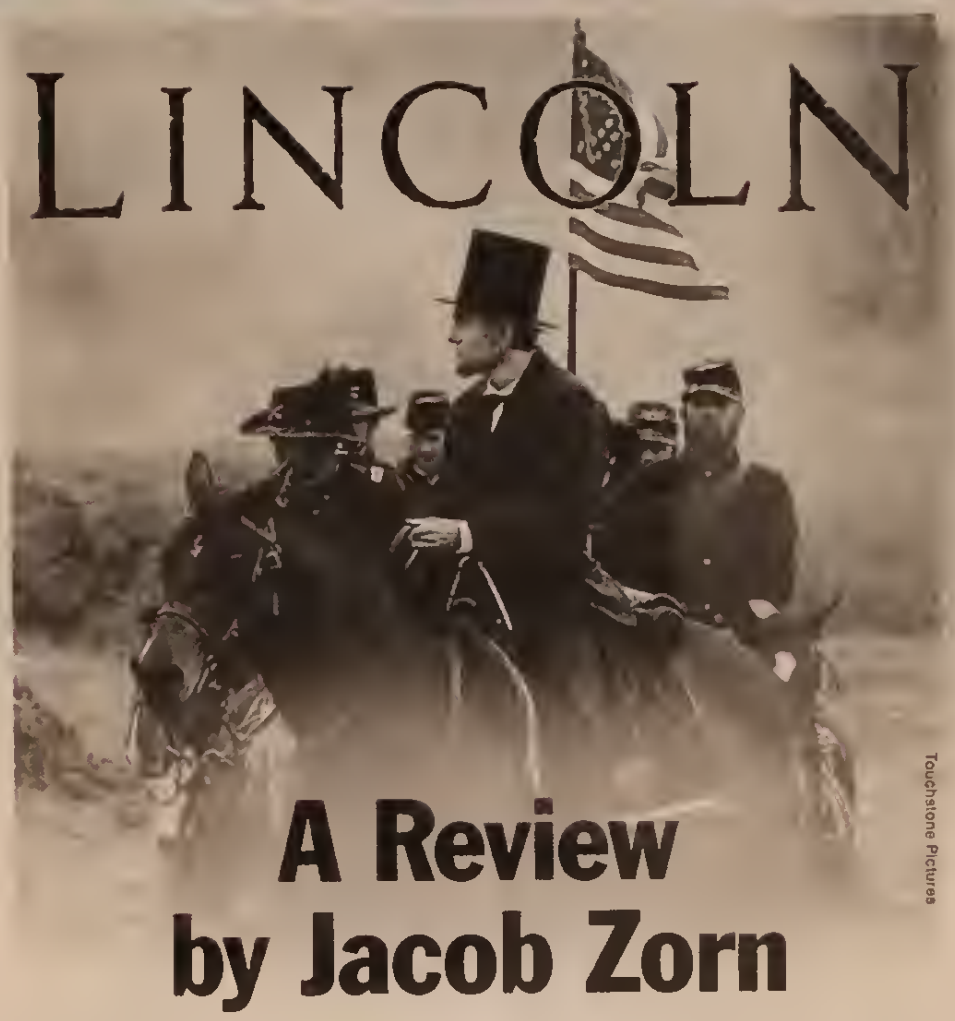
continued on page 11

AP

Murray/LA Daily News

Above: ILWUers and supporters mass on tracks in Vancouver, Washington to stop train bound for EGT terminal at Port of Longview, 7 September 2011. Right: Striking clerical workers at Port of Long Beach, November 28.

Civil War, Not Compromise, Smashed Slavery



Touchstone Pictures

A Review by Jacob Zorn

Lincoln—Steven Spielberg's new movie based on a screenplay by Tony Kushner—begins with a battle scene that highlights the bravery of black soldiers, some 200,000 of whom fought in the Civil War. Two of them are seen talking to President Lincoln and criticizing the Union Army's racist policies, paying blacks less than whites and preventing them from advancing to officers. One of the soldiers wonders whether blacks will have the vote in a hundred years. This sequence hints at the crucial role played by black soldiers in the armed struggle that broke the slave power in the South, but the film then entirely switches gears.

The movie's plot reduces the abolition of slavery to so many parliamentary maneuvers by the wise and clever Lincoln to get the House of Representatives in early 1865 to pass the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which abolished slavery. In the process, it distorts the significance of the Amendment and the role of the abolitionists, who were the main force, then and for decades before, pushing for an end to slavery.

To its credit, *Lincoln* is forthright that the Civil War was about slavery and does depict Lincoln, with all his contradictions and strengths, as devoted to not just winning the war but smashing the Southern slavocracy. The movie is based in part on a chapter in Doris Kearns Goodwin's *Team of Rivals, The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* (2005). While other historians—particularly James McPherson, who wrote the classic *Battle Cry of Freedom* (1988), and Eric Foner—present a deeper understanding of the social and political forces at work in the Civil War, Goodwin's book underscores Lincoln's political genius and canny leadership in leading the North to victory.

The opening scene is done in a manner to wrongly suggest that racial oppression is a relic of the past long since overcome. The not-too-thinly-disguised goal of the movie is to laud President Obama and to underline how he, supposedly like Lincoln, should seek "bipartisan" compromises with adversaries. By extension, his left critics are expected to give the president a break. When interviewed on NPR, Kushner gushed about what a great president Barack Obama is and what a "blessing" it was to see "the Obama years through a Lincoln lens." Kushner then rhapsodized about the virtues of compromise and horse trading. This message was not lost on most of the bourgeois commentary on the film—as shown in the *L.A. Times* (28 November 2012) headline: "Gov. Jerry Brown Could Learn a Lesson From 'Lincoln'."

Lincoln is not without entertainment value, with its excellent acting by Daniel Day-Lewis (as Lincoln) and Tommy Lee Jones (as Pennsylvania Republican Congressman and abolitionist Thaddeus Stevens). If the only problem of the movie was simply the narrow focus of its plot, it could be partly alleviated by watching it in conjunction with the superb movie *Glory*. An inspiring portrayal of the black soldiers in the Massachusetts 54th regiment, *Glory* gives a sense of what was required for Union victory in a way that *Lincoln* does not.

Library of Congress
Radical abolitionist Thaddeus Stevens

But the main weakness of *Lincoln* is that in trying to show the Lincoln years through the Obama lens the movie distorts history. Barack Obama is Commander-in-Chief of a capitalist system long into its imperialist epoch of decay. The Civil War was the last great progressive act of the American bourgeoisie. To further the consolidation of industrial capitalism, when the exploitation of free labor represented an historical advance, the North was compelled to destroy the system of chattel slavery in the South. Today racist U.S. imperialism continues to carry out what has been more than a century of pillage and war across the globe, brutally exploiting labor at home and abroad while qualitatively arresting wider social and economic development. The American capitalist rulers are the main enemy of the world's working people and oppressed.

It will serve some good if *Lincoln* piques interest in the Civil War among its viewers. But it must be understood that the movie obscures the fact that only a social revolution could have uprooted slavery, smashing everything that stood in its way. By the same token, it will take a socialist revolution by the proletariat and its allies to eradicate capitalist wage slavery.

The Thirteenth Amendment

The Thirteenth Amendment, which had its origins in a petition campaign by anti-slavery women suffragettes in early 1864, states: "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction." The Thirteenth Amendment codified the end of slavery. Lincoln's insistence that his generals fight to crush the opposing Confederate armies, and not his search for "bipartisanship," paved the way for the passage of the Amendment.

In July 1862, as slaves were fleeing Southern plantations and seeking freedom behind Union Army lines, Congress authorized the "confiscation"—i.e., emancipation—of Confederates' slaves. In January 1863, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, which he had drafted the previous September. It declared that slaves in Confederate-controlled areas "shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free." With the Proclamation, the war openly became a social revolution to emancipate an oppressed class, the chattel slaves, and destroy an oppressor class, the slave masters. The Emancipation Proclamation also sanctioned the recruitment of black soldiers, such as those Lincoln visited in the first scene of the movie.

The revolutionary aspect of the war was resisted by many Northerners, especially those in the Democratic Party, which was the party that ran the slave South. These Northern Democrats—the so-called "Copperheads"—were antiwar and opposed abolition. In the movie, their main spokesman is Democratic Congressman Fernando Wood, a former mayor of New York City. The clash of the two parties came to a head in the election of 1864, when the Democrats ran General George B. McClellan—whom Lincoln had fired as the commanding general of the Union Army because he refused to fight to win the war. Meanwhile, with Ulysses S. Grant in charge, the tide of the war had begun to decisively turn, and the Union Army was on an offensive through the South.

In the election, the Democrats' slogan was "The Constitution As It Is, and the Union As It Was." In other words, end the war and keep slavery. McClellan was decisively defeated, winning only New Jersey and the border states Delaware and Kentucky. Lincoln's victory signaled support for continuing the war until the slavocracy was defeated, with the Republicans gaining enough seats in Congress to guarantee passage of the Thirteenth Amendment.

From Lincoln's perspective, the question was not whether slavery would be abolished, but whether the Amendment would be passed by the outgoing Congress in early 1865 or the incoming Congress later that spring. This consideration was not trivial. Rather than wait for the new Republican-dominated Congress to be convened, Lincoln wanted it to pass with some Democratic support. To do so would be a show of national support for abolition and would undercut the Copperheads, making it impossible to conclude peace on any basis except abolition.

The movie shows in detail how Lincoln—mainly acting through his secretary of state, William H. Seward—manipulated, cajoled, flattered and bribed various Democrats to support the Amendment. In the end, he obtained enough support from "lame duck" Democratic Congressmen to get it passed. Rather than the culmination of the Civil War, the drama in Congress represented a sideshow—albeit an important one—to the abolition of slavery. Eric Foner stressed in a letter to the *New York Times* (26 November 2012) about the movie: "Even as the House debated, [Union general] Sherman's army was marching into South Carolina, and slaves were sacking plantation homes and seizing land. Slavery died on the ground, not just in the White House and the House of Representatives."

The viewer would not know from the movie that to become law, amendments must be ratified by three-fourths of the states. When this happened in December 1865, it was because the North had militarily defeated the Confederacy. Among the states that ratified the Thirteenth Amendment were several in the South. James McPherson captured the real lesson of its adoption when he wrote: "Without the Civil War there would have been no confiscation act, no Emancipation Proclamation, no Thirteenth Amendment (not to mention the Fourteenth and the Fifteenth), certainly no self-emancipation, and almost certainly no end of slavery for several more decades at least" (*Drawn with the Sword*, 1997).

The Abolitionists and Radical Republicans

Radical abolitionism, the first interracial political movement in the United States, had pointed out decades before the Civil War that the slave system could not be reformed but had to be destroyed. At the time, mainstream politicians either essentially ignored slavery (the Whig Party) or supported it (the Democratic Party). For their bravery, the abolitionists were attacked, denounced and belittled.

The more farsighted elements of the capitalist class in the North eventually coalesced into the Republican Party. At the time of the 1860 presidential election, the Republican Party was not an abolitionist party, and Lincoln, its candidate, wanted only to limit slavery from expanding into the West. But both the slavocracy and Republicans understood that if slavery were prevented from expanding, it could not survive, in large part because its agricultural methods demanded ever more virgin soil. Lincoln's victory prompted the Southern states to secede, provoking the Civil War. From its outset, the abolitionists understood that slavery was the central issue. Former slave and abolitionist leader Frederick Douglass insisted that it was futile to "separate the freedom of the slave from the victory of the government." He declared: "War for the destruction of liberty must be met with war for the destruction of slavery."

This was underlined by Karl Marx, who from London agitated among British workers in support of the North. In "The Civil War in the United States" (October 1861), Marx stressed: "The present struggle between the South and North is, therefore, nothing but a struggle between two social systems, the system of slavery and the system of free labour. The struggle has broken out because the two systems can no longer live peacefully side by side on the North American continent. It can only be ended by the victory of

one system or the other." Criticizing Lincoln's early wavering on emancipation, Marx declared, "Events themselves drive to the promulgation of the decisive slogan—*emancipation of the slaves*."

In the early stages of the war, Lincoln was fearful of the reaction of the four pro-Union slave border states as well as the Copperheads. The abolitionists and Radicals pushed Lincoln to grasp the need to smash slavery in order to win the war. Thaddeus Stevens declared: "It is plain that nothing approaching the present policy will subdue the rebels."

In our article "Honor Abraham Lincoln!" (*WV* No. 938, 5 June 2009), which elaborates on the evolution of his views on race over the course of the Civil War, we stated:

> "The American Civil War was a bourgeois revolution, and Lincoln was both bourgeois and revolutionary at the same time—with all the contradictions this implies.... Borrowing from today's terminology, one could argue that Lincoln began as a reformist, believing that the reactionary social system in the South could be pressured into change and that the institution of slavery would eventually wither on the vine. But he underwent a radical shift when bloody experience in the crucible of war—combined with the mass flight of the slaves to the Union lines—taught him that the nation could be preserved only by means of social revolution."

It is hard to say to whom the movie does more injustice, Lincoln or the abolitionists. Lincoln is turned into some Obama-style centrist, and the abolitionists into well-meaning people who couldn't get the job done. Kushner in his interview with NPR condemned "impatience on the part of very good, very progressive people" as one of the main obstacles Obama faces today. In other words, like Obama, Lincoln's virtue was that he knew that the way to get what is important is to give as well as take.

One of the most egregious aspects of the film is the lack of even a mention of Frederick Douglass, a powerful advocate for abolition and black rights. It was Douglass who not only urged Lincoln to recruit black troops, but advocated that they be treated fairly and paid the same as whites. Douglass had met and argued

Library of Congress

Soldiers of the 107th U.S. Colored Troops at Fort Corcoran, near Washington, D.C. Black soldiers were key to Union victory in the Civil War.

with Lincoln on a number of occasions, including at the reception after his second inaugural address, as Goodwin relates in the chapter of her book on the Thirteenth Amendment.

The one abolitionist who factors prominently in the movie is Thaddeus Stevens. Stevens has long been vilified, like many Radicals, as a vindictive fanatic who was likely mad. By portraying Stevens sympathetically, the movie hopefully will spur people to learn more about him and the other radical abolitionists.

Yet the film deals with Stevens one-sidedly. At one point in the movie, during a private conversation, Lincoln lectured Stevens that if matters had been left to the Radicals, emancipation would have failed: "But if I'd listened to you, I'd've declared every slave free the minute the first shell struck Fort Sumter; then the border states would've gone over to the Confederacy, the war would've been lost and the Union along with it, and instead of abolishing slavery, as we hope to do, in two weeks, we'd be watching helpless as infants as it spread from the American South into South America."

There is a grain of truth to this since Lincoln the politician was mindful of public opinion and tried not to put himself too far ahead of it. But it leaves out how instrumental abolitionists like Stevens were in the fight against slavery. As Stevens' biographer put it, "Thaddeus Stevens in the House and Charles Sumner in the Senate led the struggle against widespread apathy and fear, pushing through Congress the limited emancipation measures that prepared the nation for general emancipation and the Thirteenth Amendment" (Fawn M. Brodie, *Thaddeus Stevens: Scourge of the South*, 1959).

A telling example of how the movie tries to fit the abolition of slavery into the mold of compromise and bipartisanship is the dramatic tension over what Stevens would say in the House debate over the Thirteenth Amendment. Stevens was known for his saber-sharp sarcasm. In the movie, Ohio Congressman James Ashley—who sponsored the Amendment—begs Stevens to "compromise" in his advocacy of racial equality, "or you risk it all." The movie then shows Stevens arguing with Fernando Wood on January 27, i.e., shortly before the final vote. In response to Wood's badgering, Stevens states that he did not believe everybody was equal, but only should be treated equally before the law.

The drama of the scene is false, concocted in order to bolster the movie's message of political conciliation. In fact, it was over three weeks before the voting when Stevens said that he advocated only "equality before the laws," and he did so in response to Ohio Representative Samuel Cox, a Democrat who ended up voting for the Amendment. In any case, Stevens' supposed "compromise"—civil rights for black people—was not only far ahead of most other politicians but also ahead of the actual Thirteenth Amendment.

Reconstruction

Several times in the movie, Lincoln declares that he was focused only on the task at hand—winning the war and abolishing slavery. He tells Stevens that he refuses to discuss Reconstruction after the war: "We shall oppose one another in the course of time. Now we're working together." Fair enough: one cannot fault a movie about Lincoln for not delving into what happened after the president's assassination. But the movie's refusal to even touch on what happened after the war serves a purpose. To do so would expose the folly of moderation and compromise with the pro-slavery forces.

After Vice President Andrew Johnson, a Democrat from the mountains of Tennessee, assumed the presidency following Lincoln's death, remnants of the defeated Confederacy made it clear that, while their military defeat had forced them to accept the end of slavery, they had no intention of accepting black people as genuinely free. Southern states sent former Confederates to Congress and passed "black codes" that all but re-enslaved blacks. Meanwhile, Johnson carried out a policy of conciliating the South and was openly disdainful of black people.

Combating Johnson's equivocal Reconstruction policy, Stevens and other Radical Republicans carried out what became known as Radical Reconstruction. Refusing to allow the Southern representatives to sit in Congress, they passed laws—overriding Johnson's repeated vetoes—that protected the rights of former slaves,

continued on page 7

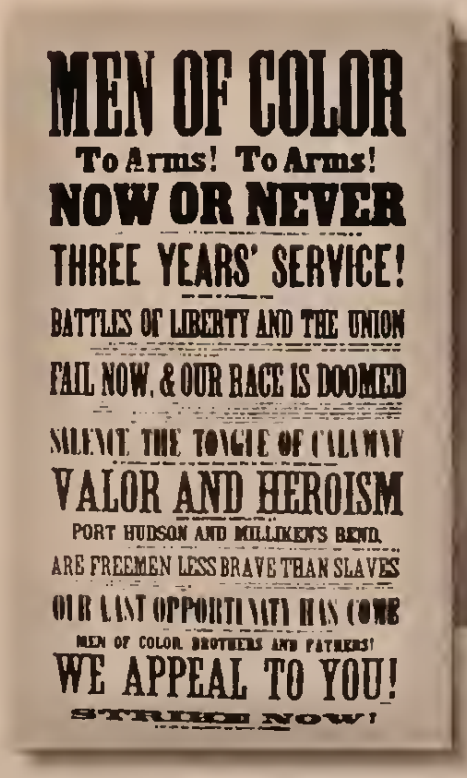
"Emancipation Proclaimed"

By Frederick Douglass, October 1862

In celebration of the 150th anniversary of the 1 January 1863 issuance of Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, we reprint below an October 1862 article by Frederick Douglass from *Douglass' Monthly*, published in Rochester, New York. The article hails Lincoln's preliminary announcement of the proclamation on September 22.

Douglass, who escaped from slavery in Maryland in 1838, was an electrifying agitator and outstanding political leader. Breaking with the "moral suasion" line of abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, by the early 1850s Douglass argued that slavery could not be ended short of armed struggle. With the onset of the Civil War, he along with other militant abolitionists and Radical Republicans, such as Wendell Phillips and Thaddeus Stevens, sought to convince Republican moderates to agree to an emancipation proclamation and the arming of black soldiers to smash the Confederate slavocracy. Following the Emancipation Proclamation, Douglass actively recruited black troops to the Union Army. He continued to fight for black equality after the war and the formal abolition of slavery in 1865.

* * *



Frederick Douglass House

Leading black abolitionist Frederick Douglass campaigned for black enlistment in the Union Army.

Common sense, the necessities of the war, to say nothing of the dictation of justice and humanity have at last prevailed. We shout for joy that we live to record this righteous decree. *Abroham Lincoln*, President of the United States, Commander-in-Chief of the army and navy, in his own peculiar, cautious, forbearing and hesitating way, slow, but we hope sure, has, while the loyal heart was near breaking with despair, proclaimed and declared: "*That on the First of January, in the Year of Our Lord One Thousand, Eight Hundred and Sixty-three, All Persons Held as Slaves Within Any State or Any Designated Part of a State, The People Whereof Shall Then be in Rebellion Against the United Stotes, Shall be Thenceforward and Forever Free.*" "Free forever" oh! long enslaved millions, whose cries have so vexed the air and sky, suffer on a few more days in sorrow, the hour of your deliverance draws nigh! Oh! Ye millions of free and loyal men who have earnestly sought to free your bleeding country from the dreadful ravages of revolution and anarchy, lift up now your voices with joy and thanksgiving for with freedom to the slave will come peace and safety to your country. President Lincoln has embraced in this proclamation the law of Congress passed more than six months ago, prohibiting the employment of any part of the army and naval forces of the United States, to return fugitive slaves to their masters, commanded all officers of the army and navy to respect and obey its provisions. He has still further declared his intention to urge upon the Legislature of all the slave States not in rebellion the immediate or gradual abolishment of slavery. But read the proclamation for it is the most important of any to which the President of the United States has ever signed his name.

Opinions will widely differ as to the practical effect of this measure upon the war. All that class at the North who have not lost their affection for slavery will regard the measure as the very worst that could be devised, and as likely to lead to endless mischief. All their plans for the future have been projected with a view to a reconstruction of the

continued on page 6

Emancipation Proclaimed...

(continued from page 5)

American Government upon the basis of compromise between slaveholding and non-slaveholding States. The thought of a country unified in sentiments, objects and ideas, has not entered into their political calculations, and hence this newly declared policy of the Government, which contemplates one glorious homogeneous people, doing away at a blow with the whole class of compromisers and corrupters, will meet their stern opposition. Will that opposition prevail? Will it lead the President to reconsider and retract? Not a word of it. Abraham Lincoln may be slow, Abraham Lincoln may desire peace even at the price of leaving our terrible national sore untouched, to fester on for generations, but Abraham Lincoln is not the man to reconsider, retract and contradict words and purposes solemnly proclaimed over his official signature.

The careful, and we think, the slothful deliberation which he has observed in reaching this obvious policy, is a guarantee against retraction. But even if the temper and spirit of the President himself were other than what they are, events greater than the President, events which have slowly wrung this proclamation from him may be relied on to carry him forward in the same direction. To look back now would only load him with heavier evils, while diminishing his ability, for overcoming those with which he now has to contend. To recall his proclamation would only increase rebel pride, rebel sense of power and would be hailed as a direct admission of weakness on the part of the Federal Government, while it would cause heaviness of heart and depression of national enthusiasm all over the loyal North and West. No, Abraham Lincoln will take no step backward. His word has gone out over the country and the world, giving joy and gladness to the friends of freedom and progress wherever those words are read, and he will stand by them, and carry them out to the letter. If he has taught us to confide in nothing else, he has taught us to confide in his word. The want of Constitutional power, the want of military power, the tendency of the measure to intensify Southern hate, and to exasperate the rebels, the tendency to drive from him all that class of Democrats at the North, whose loyalty has been conditioned on his restoring the union as it was, slavery and all, have all been considered, and he has taken his ground notwithstanding. The President doubtless saw, as we see, that it is not more absurd to talk about restoring the union, without hurting slavery, than restoring the union without hurting the rebels. As to exasperating the South, there can be no more in the cup than the cup will hold, and that was full already. The whole situation having been carefully scanned, before Mr. Lincoln could be made to budge an inch, he will now stand his ground. Border State influence, and the influence of half-loyal men, have been exerted and have done their worst. The end of these two influences is implied in this proclamation. Hereafter, the inspiration as well as the men and the money for carrying on the war will come from the North, and not from half-loyal border States.

The effect of this paper upon the disposition of Europe will be great and increasing. It changes the character of the war in European eyes and gives it an important principle as an object, instead of national pride and interest. It recognizes and declares the real nature of the contest, and places the North on the side of justice and civilization, and the rebels on the side of robbery and barbarism. It will disarm all purpose on the part of European Government to intervene in favor of the rebels and thus cast off at a blow one source of rebel power. All through the war thus far, the rebel ambassadors in foreign countries have been able to silence all expression of sympathy with the North as to slavery. With much more than a show of truth, they said that the Federal Government, no more than the Confederate Government, contemplated the abolition of slavery.

But will not this measure be frowned upon by our officers and men in the field? We have heard of many thousands who have resolved that they will throw up their commissions and lay down their arms, just so soon as they are required to carry on a war against slavery. Making all allowances for exaggeration there are doubtless far too many of this sort in the loyal army. Putting this kind of loyalty and patriotism to the test, will be one of the best collateral effects of the measure. Any man who leaves the field on such a ground will be an argument in favor of the proclamation, and will prove that his heart has been more with slavery than with his country. Let the army be cleansed from all such pro-slavery vermin, and its health and strength will be greatly improved. But there can be no reason to fear the loss of many officers or men by resignation or desertion. We have no doubt that the measure was brought to the attention of most of our leading Generals, and blind as some of them have seemed to be in the earlier part of the war, most of them have seen enough to convince them that there can be no end to this war that does not end slavery. At any rate, we may hope that for every pro-slavery man that shall start from the ranks of our loyal army, there will be two anti-slavery men to fill up the vacancy, and in this war one truly devoted to the cause of Emancipation is worth two of the opposite sort.

Whether slavery will be abolished in the manner now proposed by President Lincoln, depends of course upon two conditions, the first specified and the second implied. The first is that the slave States shall be in rebellion on and after the first day of January 1863 and the second is we must have the ability to put down that rebellion. About the first there can be very little doubt. The South is thoroughly in earnest and confident. It has staked everything upon the rebellion. Its experience thus far in the field has rather increased its hopes of final success than diminished them. Its armies now hold us at bay at all points, and the war is confined to the border States slave and free. If Richmond were in our hands and Virginia at our mercy, the vast regions beyond would still remain to be subdued. But the rebels confront us on the Potomac, the Ohio, and the Mississippi. Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, and Virginia are in debate on the battlefields and their people are divided by the line which separates treason from loyalty. In short we are yet, after eighteen months of war, confined to the outer margin of the rebellion. We have scarcely more than touched the surface of the terrible evil. It has been raising large quantities of food during the past summer. While the masters have been fighting abroad, the slaves have been busy working at home to supply them with the means of continuing the struggle. They will not down at the bidding of this Proclamation, but may be safely relied upon till January and long after January. A month or two will put an end to general fighting for the winter. When the leaves fall we shall hear again of bad roads, winter quarters and spring campaigns. The South which has thus far withstood our arms will not fall at once before our pens. All fears for the abolition of slavery arising from this apprehension may be dismissed. Whoever, therefore, lives to see the first day of next January, should Abraham Lincoln be then alive and President of the United States, may confidently look in the morning papers for the final proclamation, granting freedom, and freedom forever, to all slaves within the rebel States. On the next point nothing need be said. We have full power to put down the rebellion. Unless one man is more than a match for four, unless the South breeds braver and better men than the North, unless slavery is more precious than liberty, unless a just cause kindles a feebler enthusiasm than a wicked and villainous one, the men of the loyal States will put down this rebellion and slavery, and all the sooner will they put down that rebellion by coupling slavery with that object. Tenderness towards slavery has been the loyal weakness during the war. Fighting the slaveholders with one hand and holding the slaves with the other, has been fairly tried and has failed. We have now inaugurated a wiser and better policy, a policy which is better for the loyal cause than an hundred thousand armed men. The Star Spangled Banner is now the harbinger of Liberty and the millions in bondage, inured to hardships, accustomed to toil, ready to suffer, ready to fight, to dare and to die, will rally under that banner wherever they see it gloriously unfolded to the breeze. Now let the Government go forward in its mission of Liberty as the only condition of peace and union, by weeding out the army and navy of all such officers as the late Col. Miles, whose sympathies are now known to have been with the rebels. Let only the men who assent heartily to the wisdom and the justice of the anti-slavery policy of the Government be lifted into command; let the black man have an arm as well as a heart in this war, and the tide of battle which has thus far only waved backward and forward, will steadily set in our favor. The rebellion suppressed, slavery abolished, and America will, higher than ever, sit as a queen among the nations of the earth.

Now for the work. During the interval between now and next January, let every friend of the long enslaved bondman do his utmost in swelling the tide of anti-slavery sentiment, by writing, speaking, money and example. Let our aim be to make the North a unit in favor of the President's policy, and see to it that our voices and votes, shall forever extinguish that latent and malignant sentiment at the North, which has from the first cheered on the rebels in their atrocious crimes against the union, and has systematically sought to paralyze the national arm in striking down the slaveholding rebellion. We are ready for this service or any other, in this, we trust the last struggle with the monster slavery. ■

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President Abraham Lincoln presents the Emancipation Proclamation to his cabinet.

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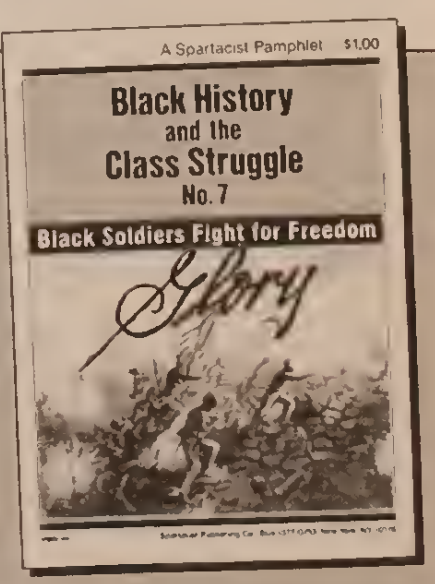

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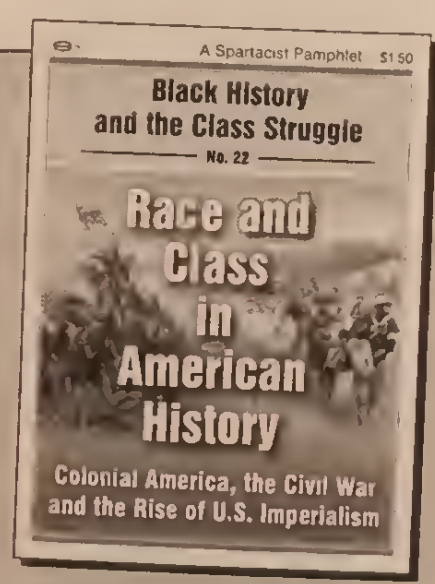

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Lincoln...

(continued from page 5)

extended the life of the Freedmen's Bureau and politically disenfranchised the former slaveowners. The Union Army was stationed in the South to enforce these laws. Meanwhile, black people were asserting their basic rights by voting, standing for office and building schools. Radical Reconstruction was the most democratic period in American history, bringing advances for poor whites, such as public education, as well.

Among the Radicals in Congress, Stevens pushed to extend Reconstruction the furthest. He advocated black suffrage, disenfranchising former Confederates and, most radical of all, seizing the former slaveholders' plantations and redistributing them to the freedmen. In the movie, Stevens articulates this vision, telling Lincoln: "We'll build up a land down there of free men and free women and free children and freedom." Since Johnson tried to subvert Reconstruction at every step, Stevens helped spearhead the drive to impeach him, which failed by one vote in Spring 1868.

One of Stevens' last acts was to campaign for the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment. That Amendment extended the rights of citizenship to everybody born in the United States, regardless of race. While *Lincoln* implies that it was with the Thirteenth Amendment that Stevens compromised, it was in fact over the Fourteenth. He had pushed to give black men the right to vote, but the Amendment instead reduced the number of representatives for states that denied blacks the right to vote. Stevens told Congress that he was going to vote for it "because I live among men and not among angels." Only in 1870, with the Fifteenth Amendment, did black men gain the right to vote.

Harper's Weekly

1868 election rally of freed black slaves in South during Reconstruction, most democratic period in U.S. history.

As we wrote in our 1966 document "Black and Red—Class Struggle Road to Negro Freedom" (reprinted in *Marxist Bulletin* No. 9, "Basic Documents of the Spartacist League"): "Capitalist and slave alike stood to gain from the suppression of the planter aristocracy but beyond that had no further common interests." In other words, even though a section of the bourgeoisie pushed to deepen Reconstruction, as a whole the ruling class had no such interest.

For Reconstruction to have succeeded would have required what Stevens advocated: breaking up the large landed estates and actually giving blacks "40 acres and a mule." But the promise of black freedom was betrayed when the Northern capitalists formed an alliance with the remnants of the slavocracy in order to exploit Southern resources and the freedmen. Particularly following the Paris Commune of 1871, when the proletariat seized power for two months in the city, the American bourgeoisie saw expropriation and redistribution of private property in the land as a potential threat to themselves.

After the election of 1876, the last federal troops were recalled from the South as part of a compromise between the Republicans and the Democrats. Black freedmen and poor white sharecroppers didn't have the social weight to defend their gains. With the racist Democrats returned to power in the South, they steadily stripped away the rights that black people had won. By the end of the century, the Southern states had disenfranchised black people and instituted formal Jim Crow segregation. The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments would be dead letters until the civil rights movement of the 1950s and '60s.

The defeat of Reconstruction was a betrayal of the promise of black equality. To this day, the Civil War remains unfinished business, with black people making up an oppressed race-color caste. They form an integral part of American society but at the same time are overwhelmingly segregated at its bottom. Although the Democrats are no longer the pro-slavery party they once were, they are no less foes of black liberation today, administering along with the Republicans the capitalist system in its death agony. The tasks of the Civil War can be finished only by smashing American capitalism through socialist revolution. ■

Mexico...

(continued from page 2)

rule of Habsburg "Emperor" Maximilian from 1864 until 1867. Indeed, in a November 1861 New York *Daily Tribune* article, Marx denounced the impending invasion of French as well as British and Spanish troops as "one of the most monstrous enterprises ever chronicled in the annals of international history" ("The Intervention in Mexico," *Collected Works*, Vol. 19).

From 1858-61, Liberals and Conservatives fought a bloody civil war in Mexico, the "War of the Reform." It was touched off when Conservatives resisted efforts by the government to limit the power of the reactionary Catholic church, including by decreeing the separation of church and state and seizing church property. When the forces of radical Liberal president Benito Juárez emerged victorious yet bankrupt, his government declared a two-year moratorium on paying the country's foreign debt. This enraged the British, French and Spanish governments (led by Queen Victoria, Emperor Napoleon III and Queen Isabella II, respectively), who reacted by signing the Convention of London in October 1861. With this pact, they pledged to occupy the customs house at the port of Veracruz in order to collect their debts.

In his *Daily Tribune* article, Marx predicted that "the joint intervention, with no other avowed end save the rescue of Mexico from anarchy, will produce just the opposite effect, weaken the Constitutional Government, strengthen the priestly party by a supply of French and Spanish bayonets, rekindle the embers of civil war, and, instead of extinguishing, *restore* anarchy to its full bloom." By January 1862, thousands of British, French and Spanish troops had landed in Veracruz. While the British and Spanish soon withdrew, the French continued their invasion, forcing the retreat of Juárez's government to the north of the country. Attempting to establish a monarchy in Mexico, the French—with the backing of propertied anti-Juárez Mexican forces—crowned the Austrian Habsburg Maximilian I in 1864.

By 1867, Juárez's forces had defeated Maximilian, in part with the aid of the United States. The U.S. had recently emerged from victory over the slavocracy in the Civil War—the last great, progressive act of the American bourgeoisie (and the prelude to the emergence of the U.S. over the next few decades as an imperialist power). In a footnote in Volume I of *Capital*, Marx noted that in Mexico, as in several other countries, "slavery is hidden under the form of ***peonage***.... Juarez abolished ***peonage***. The so-called Emperor Maximilian re-established it by a decree, which, in the House of Representatives at Washington, was aptly denounced as a decree for the re-introduction of slavery into Mexico."

D.R. seems to be confusing the attitude Marx and Engels adopted toward this incursion with their earlier support to the U.S. war against Mexico (1846-48). Marx and Engels at that time believed—wrongly—that the U.S. invasion would further the development of a modern capitalist Mexico. Thus Engels wrote in 1848 that they "rejoiced" at the U.S. conquest of Mexico, perceiving "an advance when a country which has hitherto been exclusively wrapped up in its own affairs, perpetually rent with civil wars, and completely hindered in its development, a country whose best prospect had been to become industrially subject to Britain—when such a country is forcibly drawn into the historical process" ("The Movements of 1847," *Collected Works*, Vol. 6).

Far from promoting capitalist development and social progress, the U.S. invasion of Mexico in the 1840s was in the main driven by the Southern slaveholders' need to extend the territory over which they held sway. The stage was set for the war when Texas declared independence in 1836, which D.R. aptly describes as a pro-slavery uprising. As Ulysses S. Grant wrote about the U.S. Civil War in his *Memoirs*: "The Southern rebellion was largely the outgrowth of the Mexican war. Nations, like individuals, are punished for their transgressions. We got our punishment in the most sanguinary and expensive war of modern times."

Comrade Zorn noted in his forum that industrial capitalism, which was in the process of development, was "then a progressive force, and Marx and Engels believed that one of its most progressive features was creating a nation with a unified working class." While they condemned the monumental crimes committed by Western powers against the peoples of Asia, Africa and the Americas, they initially supported colonial penetration of such backward regions as a vehicle for promoting economic and social modernization. History would subsequently show that even though the advanced countries introduced certain elements of modern industrial technology into their colonies and semicolonies, e.g., railroads, the overall effect was to arrest the social and economic development of those areas.

Marx and Engels would soon develop a very different attitude toward colonialism, expressed, for example, in their defense of the Sepoy rebellion in British-occupied India in 1857-58. Particularly important in prompting the change in their views on the oppression of weak, backward states by stronger, more advanced ones was the major role that Britain's hold on Ireland played in retarding the political consciousness of the English proletariat.

Having first championed the assimilation of the Irish into British society, in the late 1860s Marx and Engels came out for Ireland's independence. In an April 1870 letter that Marx wrote to two American followers, S. Meyer and A. Vogt, he noted that "the ordinary English worker hates the Irish worker as a competitor who lowers his standard of life. In relation to the Irish worker he regards himself as a member of the *ruling* nation and consequently he becomes a tool of the English aristocrats and capitalists *against Ireland*." Marx continued: "*This antagonism* is the *secret of the impotence of the English working class*, despite its organization. It is the secret by which the capitalist class maintains its power." He concluded that "the sole means" of hastening the social revolution in England was "to make Ireland independent." Revolutionary Marxists carry forward this perspective by championing the national liberation of peoples subjugated by the advanced capitalist (imperialist) powers.

Certainly there was no mistaking as social progress the French intervention installing Maximilian, whose family tree included Emperor Charles V, in whose name Hernán Cortés had conquered Mexico for the Habsburgs in the 16th century. ■

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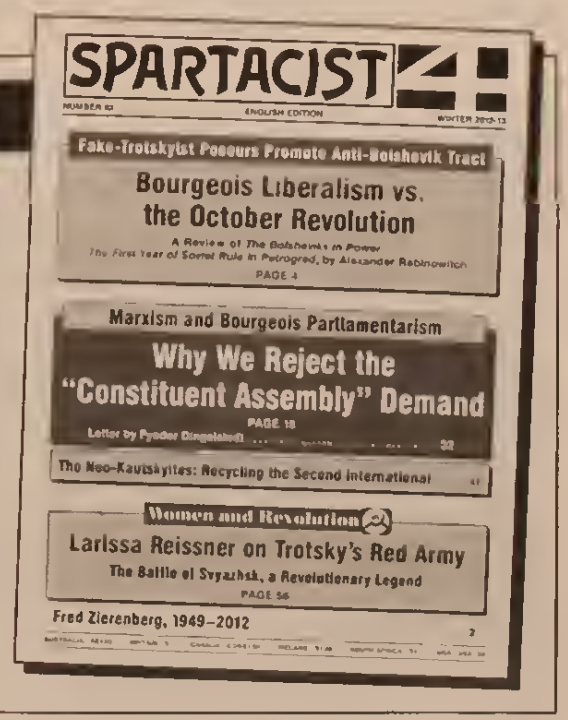


Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper

Revolution and the Right to Bear Arms

The Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

Spartacist No. 43-44, Summer 1989 (Excerpts)

Port Hudson, Louisiana, 27 May 1863: First major battle of the U.S. Civil War in which black Union troops took part.

It's really not news that guns were invented to kill people. And in this class-divided society, it has more than occasionally been necessary for "law-abiding" citizens to defend themselves with violence, even against the so-called legally constituted authorities. Are memories really so short? Recall the bloody Ludlow, Colorado massacre of 1914 in which 21 men, women and children, families of striking miners, were killed by the machine gun fire of the state militia, who were really Rockefeller's hired guns. But the workers were armed by the United Mine Workers, and to the bosses' horror for ten days some 1,000 strikers fought back bullet for bullet.

Recall as well the 1937 Memorial Day Massacre at Republic Steel in South Chicago. On May 30 of that year, in the midst of a national strike against the "little" steel companies (i.e., all the companies except the giant United States Steel Corporation), 1,500 protesters, mostly strikers and their families, marched in a holiday mood toward the Republic Mill. They were met by a solid line of 200 cops and a sudden volley of tear gas shells. As the marchers broke and ran, the cops charged with blazing guns and swinging clubs. Ten workers were shot dead, and another 40 were wounded—all of them shot in the back. An additional 101 protesters, including an eight-year-old child, were injured by clubs. In this case the strikers had been politically disarmed by their union misleaders with the line that the cops, sent to keep order by the Democratic "friends" of labor, should be "welcomed."

We also remember the 1979 Greensboro Massacre, in which five leftist civil rights workers and labor organizers were gunned down in cold blood by a Klan/Nazi group. An FBI informer led the fascists to the murder site, and an agent of the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms showed them how to use and transport the semiautomatic weapons. Or in the Philadelphia of black mayor Wilson Goode, where the cops in 1985 raked the MOVE commune with 10,000 rounds in 90 minutes, using fully automatic M-16s and M-60 machine guns, and incinerated eleven black people, including five children, in a fire ignited by C-4 plastic explosive provided by the FBI. But of course none of the "concerned" anti-gun lobbyists are advocating taking away guns from the *cops*.

White middle-class liberals preach total pacifism from the relative safety of their condos and suburban ranch houses—they don't expect the cops to come bursting into *their* homes. But the ruling class does not believe in pacifism and has carefully armed *its* state to the teeth. The whole issue of gun control revolves around the question: do you trust *this state* to have a monopoly of arms? And the answer is refracted through the deepening class and racial polarization of this society. The core of the state, after all, is "special bodies of armed men," as Lenin explained in his 1917 pamphlet *The State and Revolution*, commenting on the writings of Marx and Engels. And this is ***not our state***, but the capitalists'; they assert the state's monopoly of armed force in order to maintain their class rule.

Survey Associates, Inc.

After 1914 massacre in Ludlow, Colorado, United Mine Workers organized armed fightback against state militia.

To Disarm the People

The whole history of gun control is the story of the ruling class trying to *disarm* the population, particularly in periods of social struggle. The ban on automatic weapons is usually linked to gangsters like Al Capone, but it never stopped them from getting their hands on Thompson submachine guns, just as the mob today has its Uzis. More to the point, the 1934 ban on automatic weapons came in the Great Depression when the spectre of working-class revolution haunted Washington (in fact, that year saw three citywide general strikes led by ostensible communists). The federal gun control act of 1968 came at the peak of black ghetto upheavals. And the perennial push to ban the cheap handguns known as "Saturday Night Specials" is just an attempt to make guns more expensive and hence less accessible to the poorer classes.

* * *

In Europe and America it was the struggle against absolutist, reactionary tyrannies which produced the revolutionary principle of the "right to keep and bear arms." One of the first acts of the French Revolution was to seize weapons and ammunition from the arsenals. And every subsequent revolutionary upsurge has been accompanied by similar actions. The right to bear arms was codified by the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. What's going on today is a calculated *counterrevolutionary* attack by a decaying ruling class on these constitutional guarantees.

The Second Amendment's Revolutionary History

The clear intent of the Second Amendment (ratified in 1791), as expressed in its language, was not sport or hobby but a people's militia:

> "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed."

The constitutional right is not about hunting or target practice; the American colonial revolutionaries wanted the whole people armed, centering on military arms—in today's terms something like the AK-47—in order to be able to ***kill British soldiers***, and to forestall the threat of any standing army, which they rightly regarded as the bane of liberty and the basis of tyranny. Indeed, what triggered the American Revolution were attempts by the British army, in particular General Thomas Gage, to force colonialists to surrender their arms. As noted in a recent article by Stephen P. Halbrook:

> "The Revolutionary War was sparked when militiamen exercising at Lexington refused to give up their arms. The widely published American account of April 19, 1775, began with the order shouted by a British officer:
> "'*Disperse you Rebels—Damn you, throw down your Arms and disperse*'."
> —*American Rifleman*,
> March 1989

There is a continuum between the English Civil War, the American Revolution and the American Civil War. The question of the standing army and the king's attempts to raise taxes to finance it against the opposition of Parliament and the emergent bourgeoisie was central to the outbreak of the English bourgeois revolution. Oliver Cromwell beheaded the king in 1649 and the revolution gave birth to democratic principles, codified decades later in the English Bill of Rights of 1689 when the revolution was already ebbing and after a renewed drive to absolutist reaction under James II. As a guarantee against the Catholic/royalist threat, the English Bill of Rights listed "true, ancient and indubitable rights," including:

> "6. That the raising or keeping a standing Army within the Kingdom in Time of Peace, unless it be with Consent of Parliament, is against Law.

Gun Control...

(continued from page 1)

some states in the use of firearms.

The liberal press, echoed by the reformists of the International Socialist Organization (ISO), lament that this is a violent society—an observation akin to recognizing that bald men lack hair. From Marine barracks where "Kill 'em all and let God sort 'em out" is the watchword to church pulpits where abortion providers are deemed worthy of death, an undeniable truth is that violence "is as American as cherry pie," as 1960s black militant H. Rap Brown put it.

Mass murder is a repeated phenomenon in the U.S.—and it is regularly carried out by the state. In 1921, police in Tulsa bombed the segregated black community, killing 75 people. In Philadelphia in May 1985, black Democratic mayor Wilson Goode, in concert with the FBI, ordered the bombing of the predominantly black back-to-nature MOVE commune, killing eleven people, five of them children. An entire black neighborhood was burned down. In 1993, after a 51-day siege, Bill Clinton's Justice Department ordered an attack on the integrated Branch Davidian religious sect near Waco, Texas, killing over 80 men, women and children.

The homicidal individuals who have perpetrated mass shootings in recent years have been typically armed with semiautomatic weapons, including the AR-15, one of the most popular rifles in the country, which was used by the Newtown killer. So the gun control lobby is screaming about the need to crack down on "assault weapons." A task force led by Vice President Biden, an author of the expired ban on such weapons, is due to come up with a proposal to renew it and to put forward other restrictions. Helping feed the liberal frenzy is the ISO, declaring in "How Does This Happen?" (socialistworker.org, 17 December): "Socialists believe guns are a symptom, rather than a cause of violence—but no one should ignore what this symptom tells us about a sick society where people can purchase thousands of rounds of ammunition off the Internet, including the kind of high-volume clips apparently used at Sandy Hook, whose only possible purpose is to 'hunt' human beings." The ISO's starting point is trust in the capitalist state.

The hand-wringing over AR-15s and the like is common coin for liberals in the U.S. and elsewhere who routinely point to Japan, Britain and other advanced capitalist countries where gun control is the norm. (By way of exception, in Switzerland, which trails only the U.S., Yemen and Serbia in guns per capita, only 40 people were killed by firearms in 2010.) Whereas in U.S. cities the cops round up black and Latino youth on the pretext of drug and/or gun possession, in Britain the cops sweep up black and Asian youth for drugs and/or knives. In both cases, the cops brutalize and kill with impunity.

Robert F. Williams (center), shown with other members of Monroe, North Carolina, NAACP in 1957. His 1962 book recounts organizing self-defense against KKK terror.

Pathological violence takes place irrespective of whether guns are readily available. The same day as the rampage in Newtown, a deranged man in China, where the ruling Stalinist bureaucracy maintains strict gun control, invaded an elementary school, stabbing 22 children and a school guard. In all cases, the bottom line is that working people must have the means to defend themselves and others.

Black Rights and Gun Rights

Although nearly half of American households possess at least one gun, those standing up for Second Amendment rights are perceived as the racist, anti-immigrant, right-wing fringe. Yes, there are gun-loving reactionary lunatics who believe that the U.S. is facing an invasion by Mexico or perhaps by black United Nations helicopters. But the basic truth of the matter is something that used to be common wisdom among labor and black militants: if guns are outlawed, only cops, criminals and Klansmen will have them.

The particular violence that is woven into the fabric of American capitalist society stems mainly from the special oppression of black people, the legacy of chattel slavery. And any serious reading of the history and social reality of this country makes clear the utter necessity of black self-defense. As race-terror swept the Jim Crow South in the late 19th century, anti-lynching crusader Ida B. Wells wrote:

> "The only times an Afro-American who was assaulted got away has been when he had a gun and used it in self-defense. "The lesson this teaches and which every Afro American should ponder well, is that a Winchester rifle should have a place of honor in every black home, and it should be used for that protection which the law refuses to give."
>
> —quoted in Jacqueline J. Royster, ed., *Southern Horrors and Other Writings: The Anti-Lynching Campaign of Ida B. Wells, 1892-1900* (1997)

This isn't just a matter for the history books. In June 2011, seven white teenage thugs brutally beat and killed 49-year-old black auto worker James Craig Anderson in Jackson, Mississippi, while chanting, "White Power." Had Anderson been armed, he might well be alive today.

Black self-defense has historically been met with frenzied state repression. The earliest 20th-century gun control laws were passed in states like South Carolina, Tennessee and Mississippi as a way to disarm blacks in the face of KKK terror. With the rise of the civil rights movement, gun control again became associated with ruling-class fears of black militancy. Robert F. Williams, the head of the NAACP in Monroe, North Carolina, was hounded out of the country for organizing a defense squad against racist attacks. In Louisiana and a few other Southern states, the Deacons for Defense and Justice were successful in using firearms to protect the civil rights movement from Klan attack. Among the Deacons' standard weapons was the M-1 carbine, an "assault rifle" that they had learned to use in the Army.

An article by Jill Lepore in the *New Yorker* (23 April 2012) pointed out, "In the nineteen-sixties, gun ownership as a constitutional right was less the agenda of the N.R.A. than of black nationalists." In 1965, the New York City Council passed a bill especially to prevent Malcolm X from carrying a carbine for his protection; he was assassinated shortly afterward. In 1967, the California legislature banned the carrying of a loaded gun after a demonstration by the Black Panthers, who were legally carrying guns, at the state capitol in Sacramento. The Panthers had been patrolling the streets of Oakland, where police terror was rampant. The state ban was followed by gun control laws nationwide, especially after the ghetto upheavals that broke out following Martin Luther King's assassination in 1968.

Today black people, who are disproportionately the victims of gun violence, are those most in need of means to defend themselves. Yet in many urban centers, ghetto residents are increasingly likely to support calls by black Democrats like Congressman John Lewis and Al Sharpton for strict gun control. These calls give further fuel to the humiliating and often life-threatening stop-and-frisk programs carried out by the NYPD and cops in other cities across the country.

Violent crime in the ghettos and barrios is a direct outgrowth of the rampant unemployment and hopelessness created by the workings of the capitalist profit system. Impoverished youth thrown on capitalism's scrap heap see little chance of a way out short of risking their lives in the military or perhaps grabbing a piece of the drug trade. Marxists call for the decriminalization of drugs, which would remove the basis of the superprofits that fuel the illegal drug trade and its attendant violence.

Above all, the situation cries out for a class-struggle fight for jobs and quality housing and education for all. That task demands the building of a revolutionary workers party that would fuse the anger in the ghettos and barrios with a revived labor movement and point the way toward overturning the racist capitalist system through socialist revolution. ■

> "7. That the Subjects which are Protestants, may have Arms for their Defence suitable to their Condition, and as are allowed by Law."
>
> —quoted in Stephen P. Halbrook, *That Every Man Be Armed* (1984)

This principle was reiterated in the 18th-century Blackstone's Commentaries, still regarded as a definitive bourgeois statement on the English Common Law. The 1689 Scottish Claim of Right reiterated an identical point about the right to bear arms. In Scotland this assertion was underpinned by a widely accepted custom of bearing arms. This reflected among other things the recognition that the ability to mobilize forces of equipped and experienced fighters at short notice had often been the margin between independence and English invasion and conquest. In addition the Scottish Reformation had faced the challenge of attempts to impose French-backed Catholic absolutism.

Carrying forward the English tradition, the American revolutionaries expanded on this right, in light of their own experience in struggle against the British king, when they drew up the Constitution in 1787. In the state conventions which ratified it, a "militia" was understood to mean the armed people, not a "select" militia like the present-day National Guard (which can be federalized and keeps its arms stored in armories controlled by the government). The right to "keep and bear arms" was universally recognized as an *individual* right. As Patrick Henry summed it up, "The great object is, that every man be armed."

As in any class society, there were some big, categorical exceptions to these "universal" rights. The Second Amendment assumed it was English-speaking white Protestants that had the guns, to be used against Indians, black slaves, Spanish, Dutch and French invaders and, needless to say, the British former colonial masters who continued to threaten the young republic. Thus in South Africa today the white population is individually heavily armed as one of the means to maintain their status over the black majority. Similarly in the English Revolution the right to bear arms was directed against Catholics as perceived and frequently real representatives of reaction. Applied in Ireland this was an instrument of exploitation and terrible oppression. In Ireland after 1688, among other anti-Catholic measures, no Catholic could serve in the army or possess arms. In the later 18th century armed militias were raised in Ireland and Britain. In Ireland these mainly Protestant "Volunteers" took up the struggle for reforms. Then an "Arms and Gunpowder Bill" was passed requiring the Volunteers to turn in their arms. The radical wing, inspired by the American and French Revolutions, and led by Wolfe Tone, took up the call for universal suffrage and the removal of all laws against the Catholics. The United Irishmen uprising of 1798 was Ireland's failed bourgeois revolution.

Despite these limitations on the concept of "universal rights," the American War of Independence released a world-shaking democratic spirit, reflected in the military sphere by the arming of masses of civilians who could be trusted, out of ideological conviction, to fight for their government in loosely controlled guerrilla-type units. As was noted by Friedrich Engels, who was no mean soldier himself (being a heroic and able officer on the revolutionary side in 1848):

> "While the soldiers of European armies, held together by compulsion and severe treatment, could not be trusted to fight in extended order, in America they had to contend with a population which, untrained to the regular drill of line soldiers, were good shots and well acquainted with the rifle. The nature of the ground favored them; instead of attempting manoeuvres of which at first they were incapable, they unconsciously fell into skirmishing. Thus, the engagement of Lexington and Concord marks an epoch in the history of infantry."
>
> —"Infantry," an article for *The New American Cyclopaedia* (1859)

Abolition of Slavery by Arming the Slaves

But the Americans' so-called democracy accepted slavery, written into the Constitution itself. It was generally recognized that if the slaves got guns it would mean the end of slavery, so they were denied this legal right through the device, juridically approved by the Supreme Court in the infamous Dred Scott case in 1857, of claiming that "the people" meant only "citizens," and "citizens" did not include black slaves. Chief Justice Taney noted with horror that if blacks were citizens they would be entitled to a long list of rights, including the right *"to keep and carry arms wherever they went."*

John Brown was among a small vanguard in the 1850s who saw that only force of arms would put an end to slavery, and he became a prophetic martyr for leading the famous raid on a federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry in 1859. Meanwhile, ex-slave and abolitionist Frederick Douglass, a close friend of Brown, openly defended a man's "right of self-defense" when fugitive slaves were being hunted by agents of the slaveholders, even if this meant "shooting down his pursuers," as occasionally happened. "Slavery is a system of brute force," he said. "It must be met with its own weapons."

Thus when the Civil War came, and the Northern bourgeoisie became so militarily desperate in 1862-63 to crush the slaveholders' rebellion against the Union that Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation and agreed to the forming of black regiments, Douglass seized on this historic opportunity. "Men of Color, To Arms!"

continued on page 10

Second Amendment...

(continued from page 9)

was his slogan as he campaigned for black volunteers for such famous regiments as the 54th Massachusetts. And it wasn't only in the army that blacks fought—during the racist anti-draft riots in New York in 1863, according to one black newspaper of the time:

> "The colored men who had manhood in them armed themselves, and threw out their pickets every day and night, determined to die defending their homes.... Most of the colored men in Brooklyn who remained in the city were armed daily for self-defense."
>
> —quoted in James M. McPherson, *The Negro's Civil War* (1965)

In the post-Civil War Reconstruction period, the central struggle in the South was between the newly emancipated blacks seeking to exercise political power and the remnants of the slaveholders' government seeking to put the former slaves back "in their place." This struggle pivoted on black people's possession of arms. Hence the reactionary "black codes" passed in various Southern states tried to outlaw possession of firearms by blacks. An 1865 Florida statute, for instance, made it unlawful for "any Negro" to possess "firearms or ammunition of any kind," the penalty for violation being the pillory and the whip. In response, the federal government's Freedmen's Bureau widely distributed circulars which read in part, "All men, without distinction of color, have the right to keep and bear

Valerio/Philadelphia Inquirer

Massacre of Philadelphia MOVE, May 1985: Cops opened up with automatic weapons, while firebombing the black commune, killing eleven, including five children.

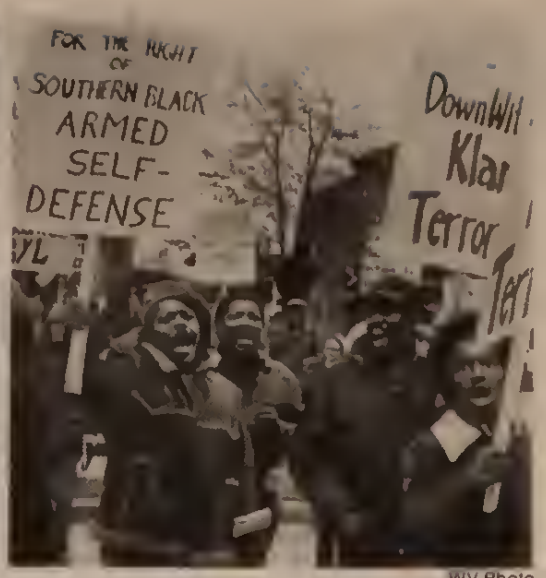
arms to defend their homes, families or themselves." But the question would be decided by military power: the racist white state militias, aided by the private Ku Klux Klan, were already disarming blacks, whose only defense was their own arms and/or the occupying Union Army. What was going on in the South was graphically described in one letter cited in Congressional hearings in 1871:

> "Then the Ku Klux fired on them through the window one of the bullets striking a colored woman...and wounding her through the knee badly. The colored men then fired on the Ku Klux, and killed their leader or captain right there on the steps of the colored men's house...."

In this case, as in many others, the Klan leader turned out to be "a constable and deputy sheriff."

While Congress adopted all sorts of paper measures protecting blacks, including the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution which guarantees "equal protection of the laws," it betrayed the promise of black liberation in the Compromise of 1877, when Union troops were withdrawn from the South. Because they could not defend their rights by force of arms, black people were denied all their rights. It took a long and often bloody struggle for the civil rights movement 80 years later to restore some of the blacks' rights won in the "Second American Revolution" which was the Civil War.

Greensboro News & Record



WV Photo

Left: Victims of 3 November 1979 Greensboro Massacre, where five unarmed leftists were gunned down by KKK and Nazis. Right: Spartacist-initiated united front in Detroit stopped Klan from celebrating a week after Greensboro slayings.

Disarming the Population

In the 19th century Karl Marx had expressed the hope that America would be one of the few countries where working people could take power more or less peacefully because the ruling class had virtually no standing army but relied on militias. Yet by the turn of the century the U.S. had entered the imperialist club and quickly developed a standing army. And over the years Second Amendment rights, supposedly inviolate, have been increasingly constricted by layer upon layer of laws which made gun-owning and armed self-defense more and more of a class privilege.

The most notorious example is New York State's Sullivan Law, which makes it illegal to carry a pistol for self-defense, unless you're one of a handful of well-connected people who can get a license to "carry" from the police department, people like real estate mogul Donald Trump and *New York Times* publisher Arthur O. Sulzberger ("Businessmen Opt to Pack a Gun," *New York City Business*, 11 March 1985). The law was passed back in 1911 after a man who felt he had been unjustly fired from his city job as night watchman shot the mayor with a revolver. Hizzoner survived, but the incident was seized upon by "prominent" citizens such as John D. Rockefeller, Jr. (the same one responsible for the Ludlow massacre) to launch a campaign for gun control. And the *New York Times* led the pack.

* * *

The Turning Point: 1848

As the call for a people's militia was adopted by the rising proletarian movement, the bourgeoisie abandoned its own slogan that "every man be armed." As noted by Friedrich Engels, the workers' demands for social equality contained "a threat to the existing order of society":

> "...the workers who put it forward were still armed; therefore, the disarming of the workers was the first commandment for the bourgeois, who were at the helm of the state. Hence, after every revolution won by the workers, a new struggle, ending with the defeat of the workers.
>
> "This happened for the first time in 1848."
>
> —Engels' 1891 introduction to Marx's *The Civil War in France*

With the appearance of the proletariat as an independent actor on the scene, "the armed people" became archaic as the population was polarized along class lines. 1848 marked the beginning of the modern world in which we still live, and the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and proletariat remains historically unresolved to this day.

The defeat of the 1848 revolutions in Europe was followed by a bloodbath revealing the "insane cruelties" of which the bourgeoisie is capable, wrote Engels. "And yet 1848 was only child's play compared with the frenzy of the bourgeoisie in 1871," when the workers of Paris rose up and formed the Commune. One of the Commune's key decisions came on 30 March 1871, when it "abolished conscription and the standing army, and declared the sole armed force to be the National Guard, in which all citizens capable of bearing arms were to be enrolled." When the Commune fell in May 1871 before the troops of the French government, behind whom stood the more substantial forces of the Prussian army, the disarming of the working class was followed by a massacre of defenseless men, women and children in which some 30,000 died.

Legislation against the possession of arms and for gun control precisely correlates with the social situation. Besides the seminal events of 1848 and 1871, the whole history of France since 1789 demonstrates the way in which the ruling class has resorted to firearms control in accord with the felt threats to its position. After the restoration of the monarchy in 1816, Louis XVIII sought to disarm the population by ordering all arms turned in. Louis Philippe in 1834 and Napoleon III in 1858 passed laws to restrict access to arms. A 1939 emergency decree of the Daladier government remains the basis for all subsequent French gun control laws, and new restrictions were imposed in 1958, 1960 and 1961, during the crisis surrounding the Algerian war for independence. However, the memory of the armed insurrection of the Communards remains alive in the French working class. And the Resistance during WW II, despite the Communist Party's nationalist, class-collaborationist role, did not exactly leave a pacifist anti-gun legacy.

* * *

The Bolshevik Revolution

It was an armed working class which made the Bolshevik Revolution, in accordance with Lenin's call:

> "Following the path indicated by the experience of the Paris Commune of 1871 and the Russian Revolution of 1905, the proletariat must organise and arm *all* the poor, exploited sections of the population in order that they *themselves* should take the organs of state power directly into their own hands, in order that *they themselves should constitute* these organs of state power."
>
> —"Letters from Afar, Third Letter Concerning a Proletarian Militia" (March 1917)

The Soviet Red Guard workers militias fought the first battles of the ensuing civil war. Like all militias, the Red Guards were not much good at first, but in war one's strength is always relative to the enemy's, and the Whites suffered from low morale. Militiamen can become professional fighters if they survive long enough to gain experience. As the founder of the Red Army, Leon Trotsky, commented in December 1921, "In the initial stages we learnt manoeuvring from them [the Whites]." And the Soviets eventually triumphed over the combined strength of 14 imperialist/Allied expeditionary forces and the tsarist White Guards.

Though the Bolsheviks advocated a socialist militia "in connection with the abolition of classes," they were forced by the fight against counterrevolution to build a standing army. Trotsky explained in the foreword to the fifth volume of his military writings (*How the Revolution Armed, 1921-23* [1981]) that the problem was rooted in the poverty and backwardness of Russia, wherein "the Red barracks constitutes an incomparably higher cultural setting than that to which the Red Army man is used at home." But when Stalin usurped political power at the head of a conservative bureaucracy, he made the standing army into a fetish, going so far as to mimic the Western capitalist armies' ranks and privileges. Trotsky denounced this:

> "No army...can be more democratic than the regime which nourishes it. The source of bureaucratism with its routine and swank is not the special needs of military affairs, but the political needs of the ruling stratum."
>
> —*The Revolution Betrayed* (1936)

Having restored the officer caste 18 years after its revolutionary abolition, Stalin then beheaded the Red Army on the eve of Hitler's invasion.

In the shadow of the oncoming world war, Trotsky's Fourth International insisted in its 1938 *Transitional Program*: "The only disarmament which can avert or end war is the disarmament of the bourgeoisie by the workers. But to disarm the bourgeoisie the workers must arm themselves." Its program for revolutionary struggle against imperialism and war included the call for: "Substitution for the standing army of a *people's militia*, indissolubly linked up with factories, mines, farms, etc." Its demands for military training and arming of workers and peasants under the control of workers' and peasants' committees were coupled with the demand for "complete independence of workers' organizations from military-police control."...

Having guns is no magic talisman, but an unarmed population faces merciless slaughter at the hands of this vicious ruling class whose state is armed to the teeth. For as Karl Marx summed it up in *Capital* (1867), "Force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with the new." ■

Soviet Writer

Red Guards in Petrograd, 1917. Banner reads: "Long Live the Universal Arming of the People and the Workers First of All."

Michigan...

(continued from page 12)

capitalist parties is only one of approach. Take the smashing of the PATCO air traffic controllers union in 1981. It was conceived by the Democratic Carter administration and implemented by Ronald Reagan. Benefitting from union money and get-out-the-vote efforts, Democrats might stop just short of outright crushing the unions, at least as long as they remain under the watch of the docile "labor lieutenants of capital." Turning back the ruling-class war against labor will require breaking labor's political subservience to the Democrats and the capitalist order.

Detroit: Capitalist Devastation

Ever since their profit margins narrowed in the 1970s, mainly due to Japanese competition, the Big Three have carried out repeated waves of plant closures in the Rust Belt, moving a good deal of production to low-wage areas in the open shop South as well as other countries. Michigan's urban landscape is a testament to this decay and immiseration, a direct result of the capitalist system of production for profit. Once the hub of the U.S. auto industry, Detroit is now a wasteland that lost one quarter of its population from 2000 to 2010.

As the last hired and first fired in racist capitalist America, black workers have been particularly hard-hit, a situation made worse by the financial meltdown in 2008. Over the next three years, black male joblessness in Detroit hovered at 50 percent. The jails were overflowing, and the housing market imploded.

Sheldon Dick

Workers occupy GM Fisher Body No. 1 plant in Flint, Michigan, during 1936-37 sit-down strike that won union recognition for UAW.

To forestall bankruptcy, three years ago Mayor Bing hatched a plan to cut off city services, including road repairs, streetlights and garbage collection, to the 20 percent of Detroit that he deemed expendable. Now, with the city teetering on the brink of insolvency, the governor is angling to appoint an emergency manager (EM) for Detroit. Under the terms of another bill rammed through the legislature at the end of the year, the state can place municipalities and school districts into receivership. The EM appointee will have the power to void union contracts outright and liquidate city assets. The same legislative session also enacted a pair of vicious laws attacking women's fundamental right to abortion.

If Detroit is put into receivership, a wide swath of the state's population, including a majority of its black residents, will be subject to the diktats of unelected officials, as cities like Flint, Pontiac and Benton Harbor already operate under an EM. A taste of what the State of Michigan has in store can be gleaned from its takeover of Detroit Public Schools (DPS) in 2009. Out to bust the teachers union, the EM in 2011 sent a layoff notice to every teacher and other salaried DPS employee. Nearly one half of the city's schools have closed down in the last five years.

In Michigan, as elsewhere, struggles by labor to revitalize the unions would find many allies among the ghetto and barrio poor by taking up the fight for jobs, quality housing, education, health care and more. Even in devastated Detroit, black workers still form the backbone of the city's proletariat and could serve to link the power of the working class to the simmering anger of the ghettos. Throughout the country, it is crucial for labor to actively defend the rights of immigrants, an increasingly important component of the working class. Any struggle to unionize the open shop South will directly pose the need for labor to combat anti-black racism and anti-immigrant bigotry.

The labor tops give a nod to the crucial need to replenish the ranks of labor by organizing the unorganized. In Michigan alone, since 1989 union membership has fallen by a third, from 26 to 17.5 percent of the workforce. But the bureaucrats confine their actions to what is deemed permissible by the capitalist state and its gamut of labor laws and regulatory bodies like the NLRB.

The class-collaborationist framework of the labor bureaucracy and its reformist tails has led to disaster for the working class. We Marxists put forward the revolutionary strategy offered by the Transitional Program, in which Leon Trotsky declared: "If capitalism is incapable of satisfying the demands inevitably arising from the calamities generated by itself, then let it perish." The burning necessity is for a proletarian revolution to rip the productive wealth of society out of the hands of the greedy capitalist rulers and build a collectivized, planned economy where production is based on social need, not profit. The way forward lies in forging a multiracial revolutionary working-class party dedicated to the overthrow of the decaying capitalist system. ■

Longshore...

(continued from page 3)

> of labor was ever won in a courtroom or by an act of Congress. Everything the workers movement has won of value has been achieved by mobilizing the ranks of labor in hard-fought struggle, on the picket lines, in plant occupations. What counts is power. The strength of the unions lies in their numbers, their militancy, their organization and discipline and their relation to the decisive means of production in modern capitalist society. The bosses are winning because the power of labor, its strength to decisively cripple the enemy, has not been brought to bear."
>
> —"Labor's Gotta Play Hardball to Win!" *WV* No. 349, 2 March 1984

Although a taste of the union's potential power was seen in late November when 450 ILWU office clerical workers went on strike at the L.A./Long Beach ports, it was a relative skirmish compared to what the ILWU is up against in the Pacific Northwest. Ten thousand ILWU longshoremen, clerks and walking bosses honored the clerical workers' picket lines. Engaged under the "legal" sanction of an arbitrator, the action effectively shut down work at ten of the 14 terminals in the largest port complex in North America. After eight days, the strike was settled as both the Los Angeles mayor and the Federal Mediation Service intervened to force a settlement.

On November 20, some 2,000 ILWU longshoremen in the Port of Oakland defied an arbitrator's ruling and honored picket lines set up by port maintenance and clerical workers. Effectively shutting down the nation's fifth largest port for one shift, the action was enough to force the port bosses back to the bargaining table. In the end, 500 workers organized by the Service Employees International Union and three other unions won a contract that defeated the port's demands for major concessions in pensions and health care.

There is no question that the grain export bosses have a gun to the head of the ILWU. Behind them stand the West Coast container and cargo shipping bosses of the Pacific Maritime Association, whose contract with the ILWU is up in 2014. But there is no hope if the union surrenders its power in advance playing by a rule book written by the capitalist class enemy.

The outcome for either the ILA or the ILWU in their current contract battles has yet to be decided. The bottom line is that their continued existence as powerful industrial unions will take a fight against the bureaucracy's class-collaborationist policies that have shackled the power of the workers to the interests of the capitalist exploiters. It is not easy to win in the face of the union-busting forces of the bosses and their state. But only through struggle can the tide be turned on the bosses' one-sided class war and a new leadership of the unions emerge. Out of such battles a multiracial revolutionary workers party will be built capable of leading the fight against this entire system of capitalist wage slavery and establishing the class rule of those who labor. ■

ACAC 19...

(continued from page 2)

released pictures and names of the arrestees. Indeed, scurrilous flyers with mug shots of Donohoe and his wife together with their address were dumped from cars and postered around their neighborhood, denouncing them as "extremely dangerous people," "members of the criminal street gang: Occupy Oakland" and "sworn anarchist revolutionaries."

At the Holiday Appeal, UC Davis professor Joshua Clover—one of those facing prosecution for a March 29 campus sit-in (see "Defend the UC Davis 'Banker's Dozen'!" *WV* No. 1007, 31 August 2012)—spoke of a growing "black scare." The bosses' media and politicians have repeatedly howled about supposed Black Bloc anarchists to set the stage for cop repression against leftist protesters.

Behind the attacks on the ACAC protests and Occupy around the country is the understanding by the capitalist ruling class that the smoldering discontent at the base of this racist, class-divided society sows the seeds for sharp class and other social struggles. The ultimate target of political repression aimed at criminalizing dissent is the multiracial proletariat, which, as the collective producers of wealth, represents the one force capable of successfully challenging the capitalist order. For struggle against capitalist rule to be successful, that social power must be mobilized under the leadership of a revolutionary party.

That Marxist perspective is rejected by "direct action" activists, who have sought to distinguish themselves from other forces in and around the Occupy movement by burning American flags and otherwise expressing their rage against the atrocities of the U.S. imperialist rulers at home and abroad. Such actions offer only an ineffectual sideshow, bringing activists into isolated conflict with the bloody fist of the bosses' state. This state apparatus, centrally the cops, courts, prisons and armed forces, is at bottom an instrument of force that defends the class rule of the bourgeoisie.

All wings of the Occupy movement share the populist conception of the "99 percent," which obscures the class division of society and has been easily subsumed into the liberal wing of the capitalist Democratic Party. It will take a socialist revolution carried out by a class-conscious proletariat to put an end to the capitalist order and open the road to an egalitarian communist future.

* * *

The Support the ACAC 19 committee has called for letters, e-mails and phone calls demanding the immediate dropping of all charges to be directed to San Francisco District Attorney George Gascón, Hall of Justice, 850 Bryant Street, Room 322, San Francisco, CA 94103; e-mail District Attorney@sfgov.org; phone (415) 553-1751. Donations can be made at the committee's Web site: supportheacac19.wordpress.com. ■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Defend the Unions Through Class Struggle!
No Reliance on the Democrats!

Michigan Passes Union Busting "Right to Work" Law

With over 10,000 trade unionists chanting "Solidarity forever!" in protest outside the State Capitol in Lansing on December 11, the Republican-controlled government enacted a law making Michigan a "right to work" state. As in Indiana, where a similar law went into effect a year ago, the bill's backers cynically portrayed it as a job creation measure in a manufacturing region ravaged by decades of deindustrialization and now reeling under the weight of the economic downturn. This was the flimsiest cover for its clear purpose: to cripple the unions financially and sow division within the workforce by making dues payments optional.

Gelly

Lansing, Michigan: Thousands of union members rally at State Capitol to protest "right to work" bill, December 11.

Michigan, home to the United Auto Workers (UAW) and once a stronghold of multiracial union power, joins 23 other open shop states, concentrated in the South, the Great Plains and the Rocky Mountains, where average wages are considerably less than elsewhere in the country. This disparity represents a major profit bonanza for the bosses. Riding high, the union-busters are crowing: "If it can happen in Michigan, it can happen anywhere" (*Bloomberg News*, 13 December). The dominos could very well continue to fall unless the "right to work" crusade is met with sharp class struggle by the unions.

The day before its passage, President Barack Obama, taking a cheap opportunity to posture as a "friend" of labor, intoned that the Michigan "right to work" bill meant the "right to work for less money." He certainly knows of what he speaks. The bailout of U.S. automakers in 2009 that he orchestrated was all about making UAW members "work for less"—or not at all—so that the industry would again turn a profit. We opposed the bailout from the outset, warning that it "will be purchased through the further destruction of the jobs and livelihoods of working people" ("Bosses Declare War on UAW Workers," *WV* No. 926, 5 December 2008). Indeed, plant closures and mass layoffs followed, clearing the way for the employment of new hires and temps at ***half the pay*** of senior workers when the companies again added jobs.

AP

UAW president Bob King hosts Obama at a UAW conference in Washington, D.C., 28 February 2012.

For UAW head Bob King, though, Obama "saved" the auto industry and its jobs with the bailout, turning a major blow against the union into a badge of honor for the White House. The union bureaucrats poured tens of millions into Obama's re-election campaign and feted him on the floor of auto plants in Midwest battleground states, while reviling the Republican candidate Mitt Romney for declaring in 2008: "Let Detroit go bankrupt." In fact, the bailout deal explicitly allowed the Treasury Department to revoke its loans to GM and Chrysler—i.e., throw the automakers into bankruptcy—in the event of an auto workers strike to resist the bloodletting. After relinquishing the tools of class struggle, the servile UAW tops sold the bailout deal to the membership by posing the choice: "voluntarily" concede or be thrown to the mercy of the bankruptcy courts.

These sellouts not only sacrificed their members on the altar of restoring the competitive edge and profitability of American capitalism but also opened the door to further attacks on labor as a whole. "Right to work" forces redoubled their efforts in places like Michigan, while state and municipal governments controlled by Democrats and Republicans alike took aim at public workers across the country. One such massive assault in Wisconsin two years ago galvanized protest by trade unionists from across the Midwest, who turned out in the tens of thousands week after week. But far from seizing the opportunity to unleash labor's strike weapon, the union officialdom channeled the outpouring of militancy into a toothless and *losing* bid to recall Republican governor Scott Walker in favor of a Democrat. This prostration before the "lesser evil" capitalist Democratic Party resulted in the gutting of the public employee unions.

Michigan's union bureaucrats served up more of the same strategy of tying labor's fortunes to capitalist electoral mechanisms. In a bid to prevent "another Wisconsin" amid a growing anti-labor chorus, they put a referendum on the November ballot to supposedly enshrine collective bargaining rights in the state constitution. In an abject display of the bureaucrats' role as "labor statesmen," they included a provision authorizing lawmakers to ban public employee strikes! Even with such reassurances, the ballot measure sparked an all-out propaganda counterattack and failed. The bosses then smelled blood. On December 4, Republican governor Rick Snyder announced that "right to work" was "on the agenda." A week later, it was law.

Giving some left coloration to the labor bureaucracy's electoral strategy, the reformists of the International Socialist Organization (ISO) dress up the Michigan ballot initiative as an "independent political action" ("What Went Wrong in Michigan?" socialistworker.org, 19 December 2012). The ISO claims it failed mainly due to the lack of sufficient activism, unlike the successful 2011 Ohio referendum on collective bargaining for public workers in that state. As we wrote in "Obama's Re-election: The Shell Game of Lesser Evilism" (*WV* No. 1013, 23 November 2012):

> "The rights of workers to organize, strike, picket and shut down production have never been codified in the Constitution. The reason is simple: they collide with the only actual guaranteed rights in this society, the property rights of the capitalist owners that are the foundation for the profits they extract through the exploitation of labor. Everything of value that workers have won has been gained through hard-fought, often bloody, class battles *against* the employers and their state."

The Class-Struggle Road

One such example is the very forging of the UAW. In the course of the 1936-37 Flint, Michigan, sit-down strike, workers occupied the GM Fisher Body No. 1 and No. 2 plants and shut production down tight for weeks. On 11 January 1937, strikers fought off an attempt by city cops in riot gear to retake the Fisher No. 2 plant in what became known as the Battle of Bull's Run. The next month, sharp military maneuvers allowed a phalanx of workers to occupy Chevrolet Plant No. 4, precipitating a crisis for the company, which capitulated ten days later and recognized the union. Wives of the GM workers and other supporters, forming a Women's Auxiliary, played a crucial role throughout these class battles.

The strike was part of a broader industrial union organizing drive sparked in part by three citywide general strikes in 1934—all led by reds—in Minneapolis, Toledo and San Francisco. As the unionization drive, which resulted in the founding of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) swept through industries in the late 1930s, the union shop took hold. But even then the leaders of the CIO, including its reformist Communist Party and social-democratic components, hitched the unions to the New Deal coalition of Democratic president Franklin Roosevelt, at a time when an advanced layer of the working class was receptive to the notion of an independent workers party.

Today's labor bureaucrats barely pay lip service to the class-struggle methods that built the unions. Beholden to the capitalist profit system, the UAW's King and his ilk offer up the unions as willing "partners" of the bosses, sapping labor's fighting strength and demoralizing the union membership. A case in point is the chauvinist "America first" protectionism long peddled particularly by the UAW tops. Promoting the fortunes of U.S. auto companies against their foreign rivals poisons the well of international labor solidarity with workers toiling in auto plants around the world.

In the wake of the Michigan "right to work" defeat, the union misleaders have announced a campaign to replace Republican lawmakers with Democrats in 2014—i.e., preferring the blows to be struck by a gloved fist. In Detroit, Democratic mayor David Bing has imposed layoffs and wage cuts on teachers and city workers while slashing basic city services to the bone. Across the country, Democrats like California's Jerry Brown, New York's Andrew Cuomo and Chicago's Rahm Emanuel have been out front in similar anti-labor attacks.

The difference between the two

continued on page 11

WORKERS VANGUARD

50¢

No. 1016 — 25 January 2013

Imperialist Troops Out of Mali Now!

JANUARY 21—In a stark assertion of French imperialism's domination over its former colonies in West Africa, Socialist Party president François Hollande has launched a bombing campaign and intervention by some 2,000 ground troops in Mali. Billed as part of the global "war on terror," the military assault was intended to force a retreat by Islamic fundamentalist forces that, having seized the northern half of the country, were threatening to march on the capital, Bamako. Hollande bluntly ordered: "Destroy them. Take them captive, if possible" (London *Guardian*, 15 January). His defense minister candidly declared that the aim of the Mali mission is "total reconquest."

However, as battles continue to rage in and around key towns that had been seized by the fundamentalists, Hollande's critics within the French ruling class are beginning to fret about sinking in a quagmire if left to go it alone. Meanwhile, the seizure of scores of hostages at a natural gas field in Algeria by Islamists declaring their solidarity with the Malian rebels—and the considerable loss of life when Algerian security retook the installation—may offer a sampling of future fallout from the imperialist occupation of Mali. After initially expressing concern over the intervention in Mali, the Algerian regime saluted the effort, crucially allowing the French military overflight rights.

While rulers of the major capitalist powers rushed to express their solidarity with the French operation in Mali, they are also reticent about contributing forces and money. The UN Security Council voted unanimously last month to approve an African "peacekeeping" mission of some 3,300 troops, and some countries of the Economic Community of West African States already have hundreds of troops on site. But the imperialists have little expectation that these forces will be an effective gendarmerie. Meanwhile Washington, after initially distancing itself from the French operation, has

continued on page 2

Imperialist Diktat Means Hunger, Disease

U.S. Ramps Up Killer Sanctions Against Iran

Reuters — MEHR

Above: President Obama threatens more sanctions against Iran, March 2012. Right: With price of poultry and other foods soaring, crowd gathers to buy subsidized chicken in Tehran, July 2012.

With a stroke of a pen, on January 2 Barack Obama consigned millions of Iranians to further devastation by strengthening economic sanctions as part of the annual National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The fourth time that Obama has ramped up sanctions since 2010, this current round was coordinated with similar measures adopted by the European Union (EU) two weeks before.

In the name of stopping the Islamic regime's purported drive to develop nuclear weapons, U.S. imperialism and its allies have unleashed their own weapon of mass destruction by strangling the Iranian economy, in particular through blocking the oil exports that are its lifeblood. Already in 2010, sanctions were crippling Iranian industry by depriving it of replacement parts. As oil revenues dried up, Tehran cut crucial subsidies for food, gasoline and other necessities. With hundreds of thousands thrown onto the streets as factories close their doors, food prices have skyrocketed and life-saving medicine has become increasingly scarce.

Iran's nuclear enrichment program, which Tehran has always insisted is not aimed at producing weapons, is just the most recent pretext for the crippling sanctions that have been imposed on the country by both Democratic and Republican administrations. The first sanctions were issued by President Jimmy Carter as payback for the seizure of the U.S. embassy in Tehran in November 1979 by forces loyal to Ayatollah Khomeini, whose reactionary "Islamic revolution" had ousted the brutal and despised Shah Pahlavi. In 1995, the Clinton administration issued an executive order barring American companies from investing in Iranian oil and gas and from trading with Iran, followed a year later by a law imposing penalties on foreign firms with substantial investments in that sector. In 2006, the UN adopted sanctions aimed at stopping Iran's nuclear development program, with further measures levied over the next few years.

The Obama administration has qualitatively tightened the economic vise on the Iranian population, including by barring companies that trade with Iran from access to the U.S. financial system. In January 2012, the White House slapped sanctions on Iran's central bank, the country's main clearinghouse for oil exports. In June, Washington banned the world's banks from completing oil transactions with Iran. The EU followed suit the next month by banning the import of Iranian oil, going on to prohibit transactions with the country's banks and declaring an embargo of its natural gas. The latest sanctions point toward a complete trade embargo, closing a loophole that enabled Tehran to barter oil and gas for precious metals. They also bar trade with Iran's energy, port, shipping and shipbuilding sectors and include penalties for supplying Iran with graphite, aluminum and steel.

Amid the growing threat of mass hunger and untreated disease, Washington spokesmen crow about the "success" of sanctions in weakening the regime of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. This course is integral to U.S. imperialist strategy under Obama's watch. As it begins to shift most of its armed forces to the Asia Pacific—a particular threat to the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state—the White House is steering away from outright military occupations and concentrating instead on more "cost effective" war measures, from attacks by drones and special ops forces to increased use of economic sanctions. John Brennan, Obama's nominee for CIA chief, is a major architect of the drone program that has wreaked terror on the populations of Pakistan, Yemen and elsewhere. Chuck Hagel, slated to take over the Defense Department, is a champion of sanctions, although he prefers the fig leaf of a United Nations mandate.

Thus, the U.S. imperialists currently

continued on page 8

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Mali...

(continued from page 1)

dispatched about 100 "trainers" to African countries that are providing troops. Last week, European Union foreign ministers agreed to send 450 "non-combat" troops to Mali, supposedly to train its armed forces.

The Obama administration, still smarting from having its Libyan ambassador killed by Islamist forces that had been armed and financed by the U.S. and its allies in the drive to topple Muammar el-Qaddafi, has ruled out sending its warplanes to Mali. The White House has also turned a deaf ear to requests that it provide air tankers to help refuel French jets, which France views as vital to its imperialist marauding given the vast distances it has to cover in crossing over North Africa. However, Washington has offered to provide limited logistical support to the French operation, as have Britain, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Canada and Russia.

AFP

French troops leave Bamako heading to north Mali, January 15.

Immediately following the announcement of the French imperialist expedition, our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyste de France issued a leaflet demanding French troops out of Mali and all of Africa and calling for defense of the insurgents against the imperialist intervention. The leaflet notes that among France's multiple security interests in the region are the uranium mines in northern Niger, which have been operated for decades by the French Areva nuclear power conglomerate and its predecessors.

The American bourgeoisie has its own imperialist interests in Africa. A Congressional report last summer titled *Africa Command: U.S. Strategic Interests and the Role of the U.S. Military in Africa* emphasized "the increasing importance of Africa's natural resources, particularly energy resources" and expressed "mounting concern over violent extremist activities." The report cited, in particular, oil production in Nigeria—Africa's largest oil exporter and the fifth-largest supplier of oil to the U.S.—and the potential for deep-water drilling in the Gulf of Guinea.

Washington has paid out tens of millions of dollars to beef up the military in Mali and neighboring countries in order to prevent jihadists from getting a foothold in the region. Under Barack Obama, the Horn of Africa port of Djibouti, where more than 2,000 U.S. troops are stationed at Camp Lemonnier, has become the busiest Predator drone base outside the Afghan war zone. Since 2007, the U.S. military has also set up a dozen small air bases in Africa, from which Special Ops forces launch surveillance flights. The U.S. military presence in Africa has grown steadily under Obama, with an average of 5,000 troops spread across the continent at any one time and 30 ships patrolling the Indian Ocean. *All U.S. bases and troops out of Africa!*

As the LTF leaflet stresses, our military defense of the insurgents in Mali implies not the least political support to the reactionary Islamists, whose atrocities include floggings, amputations and the stoning to death last summer of a couple accused of having an extramarital affair. In an act reminiscent of the destruction by the Afghan Taliban of two ancient Buddha statues in Bamiyan, the fundamentalists in Mali took pick-axes to Timbuktu's historic mausoleums and Sufi shrines, threatening as well its collection of rare archives. Much less prominently reported by the Western bourgeois press are the wholesale killings, disappearances and torture inflicted by the military regime in Bamako on its perceived opponents.

The armed rebellion in northern Mali was initially led by the secular National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), which has variously called for independence or autonomy for the Tuareg region of Mali. Distressed that the rebellion was gaining momentum, a group of officers seized power in a coup in Bamako last March, suspended the constitution and launched a campaign of terror against their political opponents. Within days, taking advantage of the chaos, the MNLA seized the whole of northern Mali in alliance with Islamic fundamentalist forces. The Islamists promptly turned on their MNLA allies and drove them from the population centers. Today, the marginalized MNLA warns of genocide if French air strikes allow the Malian army to "cross the demarcation line" separating northern Mali from the south. Nevertheless, the MNLA declares that it is "ready to help" the French intervention.

A particular target of the blood-soaked regime in Bamako has been the civilian Tuareg population. The Tuaregs, the dominant ethnic group in northern Mali, are a semi-nomadic people stretching across the Sahara who are ethnically distinct both from Arabs, who constitute the majority in the countries to the north of Mali, and the black Africans who inhabit southern Mali and control the national government and military. When the northern rebellion heated up a year ago, the military went on a killing spree, bombing the civilian population and arresting, torturing and killing Tuaregs for the "crime" of their ethnic origin. Not surprisingly, such atrocities spurred Tuaregs serving in the Malian army, including a number trained by U.S. Special Forces, to go over to the rebels.

Last February, mobs in Bamako attacked

continued on page 10

TROTSKY

LENIN

Neocolonial Slavery and World Socialist Revolution

In May 1940, as Germany was invading France during the second interimperialist world war, the Trotskyist Fourth International convened an Emergency Conference in New York City, drawing delegates from sections in North and South America, Europe, China and Australia. Among its resolutions was one, excerpted below, linking the struggle for liberation in the colonial and semicolonial world with the fight for proletarian revolution in the advanced imperialist countries.

Under the banner of bourgeois "democracy" and bourgeois "equality," the great capitalist empires were built upon the exploitation of the proletariat at home and the enslavement of weaker peoples overseas. In the three centuries of their growth, the capitalist nations warred constantly to acquire and expand their colonial domains, to defend them against the raids of rivals, or to suppress revolts of the colonial peoples. In 1914-18, the great imperialist powers fought to redivide an already divided world. They succeeded only in hastening the catastrophic decline of the capitalist system. The revolutions the war engendered, however, failed to establish in the advanced West and the backward East the proletarian power which could and can alone reorganize the world on a socialist basis. The workers won and held power only in backward Russia. Capitalism survived, but only to subject the world to the further agonies of its passing. Twenty-two years after the armistice of 1918, contorted by a crisis they were powerless to surmount, the imperialists plunged the world once more into bloody conflict—Germany, Italy, and Japan to "expand or die"—England, France, and the United States to defend and extend their world hegemony....

In the colonies, in the past, imperialist rule has meant the stifling of economic development and the perpetuation of backward economic and social relations in their most oppressive forms. If an imperialist "solution" of the present world conflict is imposed, a still greater rate of exploitation will be forced upon the colonies and the thralldom of the past deepened multifold. The Western Allies once more offer promises of "freedom" and "cooperation" after they win the present war. But acceptance of such promises only paves the way for the crueler deceptions of the Versailles [treaty at end of WWI] of tomorrow. Germany, for its part, does not bother with deceptive illusions but fights openly to rule the peoples it can conquer by blood and iron alone.

The hopes of liberation of the colonial peoples are therefore bound up even more decisively than ever before with the emancipation of the workers of the whole world. The colonies shall be freed, politically, economically, and culturally, only when the workers of the advanced countries put an end to capitalist rule and set out together with the backward peoples to reorganize world economy on a new level, gearing it to social needs and not to monopolist profits. Only in this way will the colonial and semicolonial countries be enabled to emerge from their varying stages of backwardness and take their places as integral sections of an advancing world socialist commonwealth.

—"The Colonial World and the Second Imperialist War" (May 1940), reprinted in *Documents of the Fourth International: The Formative Years (1933-40)* (Pathfinder Press, 1973)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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The closing date for news in this issue is January 22

No. 1016 **25 January 2013**

ICL Letter of Condolence to PKK

We reprint below a January 14 letter by the International Communist League to the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) expressing condolences for the execution-style killing of three female PKK members who were found dead in their Paris office four days earlier. The letter was delivered to PKK representatives in Paris on January 15 at a commemoration for the Kurdish activists that was attended by thousands. Against the backdrop of renewed Turkish military air strikes against PKK mountain camps, tens of thousands of Kurds turned out for their funerals two days later in Diyarbakir, Turkey. The letter, now available in Turkish, was also distributed at a Kurdish demonstration in London on January 18.

The International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) extends our sincere condolences to the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) on the brutal murder of their three women comrades in Paris last week. Whoever fired the shots that killed Sakine Cansiz, a founding cadre of the PKK, Fidan Dogan and Leyla Soylemez, responsibility for this gruesome killing lies squarely with the Turkish state, whose army has for decades waged a war resulting in the deaths of some 37,000 Kurds. We demand freedom now for Abdullah Öcalan and for the thousands of other Kurdish nationalists who languish in prison in Turkey and elsewhere. The blood of the Kurdish militants slain in Paris is also on the hands of Turkey's imperialist backers. The U.S. and the European Union have labeled the PKK as "terrorists." The NATO imperialist powers, who arm the Turkish state to the hilt, are in fact the most powerful and dangerous terrorists on this planet.

For many years our organization internationally has defended the PKK against state persecution in Germany, Britain and other countries, notwithstanding our political differences with the PKK. We believe that the Kurdish masses must look to an alliance with the proletariat in the countries of the region that oppress the Kurdish nation—particularly Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria—and in turn the proletariat in these countries must champion the right of Kurdish self-determination against their own capitalist rulers. From our perspective of workers revolution internationally, we look to Kurdish and Turkish workers as a key component of the proletariat in West Europe who can be a bridge to the struggles in Turkey. Our program is for a socialist republic of united Kurdistan, within a socialist federation of the Near East. ■

Imperialism, the Cold War and the Creation of Pakistan

We reprint below an edited version of a document dated 23 November 2012 that was submitted by a comrade as a contribution to party discussion. It originally appeared in Workers Hammer *No. 221 (Winter 2012-2013), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain, section of the International Communist League.*

WORKERS HAMMER

Hulton-Deutsch

Bodies of victims of intercommunal slaughter loaded onto trucks, New Delhi 1947. Partition of India left an estimated one million dead.

In Part Three that concluded the series of articles "A Marxist Critique of the New Atheists" (*Workers Vanguard* No. 1009, 28 September 2012) it is noted that: "The state of Pakistan was deliberately created as an Islamic political entity in 1947 when the British partitioned the Indian subcontinent, over which they were no longer able to maintain colonial rule." The article makes the point that, contrary to some leftist groups like the [former cothinkers of the International Socialist Organization, the British] Socialist Workers Party (SWP), there is no basic conflict between Western imperialism and Islamic fundamentalism. It goes on to quote John Foster Dulles on the common bond between imperialism, religions of the East and anti-Communism. In 1950, Dulles, soon to become secretary of state, observed: "The religions of the East are deeply rooted and have many precious values. Their spiritual beliefs cannot be reconciled with Communist atheism and materialism. That creates a common bond between us, and our task is to find it and develop it" (quoted in Paul Baran, *The Political Economy of Growth*, 1957).

The British imperialists have maintained that the partition of India was aimed at creating a homeland for Muslims where they would be protected from Hindus, a claim belied by the fact that far more Muslims were left behind in India than those incorporated in the new entity of Pakistan. Besides, in the provinces that became Pakistan, the Muslims were dominant; they were neither threatened by post-independence Hindu domination nor were they interested in a separate Muslim state. In fact, the majority of Muslims were fearful of the economic and social impact of uprooting and relocation. They resented the fact that they would be confined to the two corners of the subcontinent and have to abandon the heartland of India, where Muslim rulers held sway for over 600 years before their defeat by the British, and in which lie some of the magnificent symbols of past Muslim power and glory such as the great forts of Delhi and Agra, the Taj Mahal and others. Muslim merchants and businessmen opposed the partition out of concern for the loss of a long developed market. The sizable Shi'ite Muslim population, dreading living in a Sunni-dominated Pakistan, was oppused to the partition scheme.

Up until World War II the British depended on the strategically situated India as a military base to safeguard their interests—in the Middle East, Southeast Asia and their colonies across the Indian Ocean in east Africa. As India's independence dawned, the British, fearing that the Hindu nationalists who would rule post-independence India would deny them military cooperation, settled for creating a weak, truncated entity that would serve their imperialist interests, would depend on Britain for its defence and would be ruled by their pliable lackeys of the Muslim League of Mohammed Ali Jinnah. Through their divide-and-rule policy and using religion as a tool, the British drove a wedge between Hindus and Muslims, built close ties with Jinnah, in whom they nourished separatist aspirations, and recognised him as the sule spokesman of the Muslims of India.

In his well-documented book, *The Shadow of the Great Game: The Untold Story of India's Partition* (2005), Narendra Singh Sarila laid bare the true intentions of the British behind the partition: a meticulously calculated scheme to detach Pakistan from India, create a militarily strategic foothold aimed at the Soviet Union and maintain control over the oil fields of the Middle East. Sarila, who served as an aide-de-camp to Lord Louis Mountbatten, the last viceroy of India, was privy to the British manipulative machinations. He unearthed piles of documents pertaining to the partition: correspondence of British colonial officials; archival papers of major players, British and Indian; etc.

On 5 May 1945, the same day German forces surrendered, Churchill ordered an appraisal of the long-term policy required to safeguard the interests of the British Empire in India. The report presented to him stressed the strategic importance of India "from the northwest of which British air power could threaten Soviet military installations." Churchill told Lord Archibald Wavell, then viceroy of India, to "keep a bit of India." According to Sarila, a more candid Lord Wavell, who prepared a blueprint of the partition borders as early as February 1946, grasped the fact that: "The breach to be caused in Britain's capacity to defend the Middle East and the Indian Ocean area could be plugged if the Muslim League were to succeed in separating India's strategic northwest from the rest of the country, a realizahle goal considering the close ties that Lord Linlithgow, Wavell's predecessor, had built up with the Muslim League leader Mohammad Ali Jinnah."

Dulles' idea about utilising reactionary religious forces as a battering ram in the Cold War against the Soviet Union echoed British imperialist schemes. In his writings in the late forties and early fifties, British colonial official Olaf Caroe posed the question: "Will Islam stand up to communism?" He advocated turning Pakistan into a base for a community of Muslim states that "would show the way for reconciliation between the Western and Islamic models." A major architect of the partition, Caroe served in British India as the viceroy's chief adviser, foreign secretary and governor of the North West Frontier Province, which later became incorporated into Pakistan.

After his retirement Caroe was sent by the British Foreign Office on a lecture tour to the United States to solicit a joint Anglo-American alliance against the Soviet Union and to control Middle East oil. The theme of his lectures, in his own words, was: "The impurtance of the [Persian] Gulf grows greater, not less, as the need for fuel expands, the world contracts and the shadows lengthen from the north [i.e., the USSR]. Its stability can be assured only by the close accord between the States which surround this Muslim lake, an accord underwritten by the Great powers whose interests are engaged." Caroe wanted the U.S. to join a "partner full of garnered knowledge but overcome for a while with weariness, [as] both are faced with the imminence of Soviet Russia towering over these lands." Caroe's lectures were later published in a book titled *Wells of Power: The Oilfields of South-Western Asia, a Regional and Global Study* (1951). His schemes found resonance with American imperialists who were eager to control the oil resources and to expand the boundaries of the Cold War by ringing

Corbis

Nikita Khrushchev inspects wreckage of U.S. U-2 spy plane shot down over Soviet Union, 1960. Pakistan hosted bases for U-2s during Cold War.

the Soviet Union with a series of alliance systems in the region.

By the early 1950s Pakistan became, in the words of a Pakistani leader, "America's most allied ally in Asia." In 1954 it signed a mutual defence agreement with the U.S. Later that year Pakistan became a founding member of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), even though the country is thousands of miles away from Southeast Asia. The next year Pakistan joined the Anglo-American sponsored Baghdad Pact along with Turkey, Iraq and Iran, constituting what Dulles called "the northern tier" that linked the southernmost member of NATO, Turkey, with the westernmost member of SEATO, Pakistan. Pakistan went on to host secret bases for the CIA U-2 planes conducting espionage over the USSR, one of which was shot down by the Soviets in May 1960. In one of the Cold War historical moments, Khrushchev, with no small degree of pleasure, displayed the mostly intact wreckage of the supposedly invincible U-2 and its captured pilot, Francis Gary Powers. In the 1980s Pakistan provided a base for launching attacks against the Soviets in Afghanistan.

Workers Hammer Adds:

Following the entry of Soviet troops in 1979, Afghanistan became the front line of the imperialists' relentless drive to destroy the Soviet Union. As the CIA

continued on page 9

Spartacist Black History Month Forums

August 2012: Miners Strikes Shake Neo-Apartheid South Africa

- **Down With ANC/SACP/COSATU Capitalist Alliance!**
- **For a Black-Centered Workers Government!**

LOS ANGELES
Saturday, Feb. 9, 3 p.m.
Metropolitan Community Church
4607 Prospect Ave.
(2 blocks north of Vermont/Sunset Red Line Station)
For info: (213) 380-8239, slsycla@sbcglobal.net

150 Years Since the Emancipation Proclamation: Finish the Civil War!

CHICAGO
Saturday, Feb. 16, 4 p.m.
University of Illinois at Chicago
African American Cultural Center
830 S. Halsted St., Addams Hall, Room 207
For info: (312) 563-0441, chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net

Miners Strikes Shake Neo-Apartheid South Africa

Presentation to SYC Forum

We are pleased to publish an edited presentation given by comrade Jon Brule, member of the International Executive Committee of the International Communist League, to a Spartacus Youth Club forum held at City College of New York on November 27.

A little over three months ago in Marikana, South Africa, police attacked a picket line of mineworkers striking against the Lonmin platinum company. As a result, 34 strikers were killed and 78 were wounded. For many South Africans this brought back memories of the massacres at Sharpeville in 1960 and Soweto in 1976. But there was a key difference: those massacres had been carried out by the white apartheid regime and this massacre was carried out by the mainly black African National Congress (ANC) government, which is in an alliance with the largest trade-union federation in the country, called COSATU, and the largest workers party, which is the South African Communist Party (SACP).

AFP

January 16: Anglo American Platinum workers, who were part of last year's strike wave in Rustenburg, down tools after company announced shaft closings and job cuts.

Subsequently the government stood by the cops, as have the SACP and COSATU, and they have sought to blame militant strikers for the violence. For example, Blade Nzimande, who is head of the SACP, issued a September 17 statement that the SACP fully supports the government's crackdown and asserted that the "ring-leaders must be dealt with." In contrast, our organization in South Africa, Spartacist/South Africa, said, "Make no mistake: the blood of these massacred workers is on the hands of the *leaders* of the ANC/SACP/COSATU Tripartite Alliance and their government, who have demonstrated yet again their reliability to the Randlord rulers and their imperialist senior partners" ("Blood on the Hands of ANC/SACP/COSATU Government," reprinted in *WV* No. 1007, 31 August 2012).

So there has in fact been a real witch-hunt of the strikers on the pretext that these people are "criminals," which is allegedly proven by the fact that they were "violent" and carried arms onto the picket line. In fact, it is true they did have arms, mainly things like homemade spears and so forth. The cops were heavily armed with assault rifles. And of course the cops have claimed that they were defending themselves against these workers, and there has been one lie and cover-up after another. So for example, one independent investigation showed that many strikers were not even shot on the picket line; rather they had sought to escape and were killed some distance away from the incident. Then there was something else: the police, in order to "prove" that these guys were violent, showed photographs of the bodies of the dead strikers with spears and pangas [machetes]. Well, unfortunately for the government they had issued photos of the same individuals some time earlier without the weapons on them. In other words, they subsequently planted the weapons.

From our standpoint this was a major class battle and we communists have a side with the workers. We believe that they have a right to defend themselves against strikebreakers and police scab-herders. And our line on self-defense was stated squarely by our organization in South Africa, which said, "To listen to the sanctimonious bourgeois editorialists and Alliance tops talk, the Zulu, Xhosa and other native African warriors who were mowed down by the guns of British and Dutch colonisers should also have accepted part of the blame for the 'senseless loss of life,' because they tried to fight back with spears and other primitive weapons! We stand forthrightly for the right of *armed self-defence* of the working class against the bloody violence of the capitalist state, the bosses' security guard thugs and other professional strike-breakers. *For workers defence guards to protect the picket lines!*"

Tripartite Alliance Government vs. Miners

What this incident shows clearly is the class character of the state. When I was in South Africa some years ago, I remember having a lot of arguments with members of the SACP who assured me that the cops were now different, that this was no longer apartheid, that the cops served an allegedly progressive government, that many of them had even fought in the liberation forces of the ANC against apartheid. We had big arguments about this.

The massacre demonstrated yet again that, in fact, the state, which is based on armed bodies of men (with the police, army, courts, etc. at its core), exists as an organ of repression of one class over another. I gather you have read some of Lenin's *The State and Revolution*, if you've been participating in this class series. This was a real demonstration that the black and white cops who carried out this massacre are the bourgeoisie's thugs just as they were under the apartheid regime.

Notwithstanding the horrific violence and repression meted out by the government against the strikers at Lonmin, they persevered and won a substantial wage increase for many of their members. This caused a big problem not only for the government but also for the existing trade-union federation COSATU and for the SACP, who provide most of the cadre for COSATU. Not only was it an illegal strike that won but also it was a wildcat strike—i.e., the workers went out on strike in defiance of their own leadership, as they had been members of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM). So at the time, the COSATU leader, whose name is Zwelinzima Vavi, issued a statement on Twitter saying, "Cosatu and NUM will have to act fast or this deal can collapse...every bargaining system in place...it can communicates [sic] the message workers can lead themselves and get what they want" (*Mail & Guardian* online, 19 September 2012).

Indeed, that's what has started to happen. The strike at this particular platinum mine spread to other platinum mines, and then gold mines and chrome mines, and at least one iron ore mine, and also to other sections of the country. Currently there is a big, hard-fought strike in the Western Cape, another strike that is being waged by probably the most oppressed section of the working class in South Africa, the farm workers. In fact, only about 5 percent of these people have ever been organized into unions. But they are on strike today. In total there were some 100,000 mineworkers who were on strike at one time or another when these strikes were going on. The economy lost something like 10 billion rand, which is a little over a billion American dollars. In retaliation, the companies dismissed, or rather attempted to dismiss, thousands of miners from their jobs. Numerous miners are still facing charges.

When I was over there in September, there was a COSATU conference. Our comrades took three different placards and set up a literature table outside this conference. And the placards said: "Drop All the Charges! Victory to the Striking Mineworkers!" "Cops and Security Guards Out of the Unions!" and "Break With the Bourgeois Tripartite Alliance! For a Black-Centred Workers Government!" The literature sale was going briskly. There was a lot of interest in our material. Then all of a sudden, a large number of bureaucratic goons attacked the lit table and the comrades. They made a bonfire and threw all of our literature on it and burned it.

Why did they do this? It was not particularly because they felt threatened by a small Trotskyist organization. Rather, it was because they were hysterical and quite frenzied over the example of this mineworkers strike, this wildcat strike, and the fear that it would spread to other sections of the working class.

Gallo

Marikana, South Africa: Aftermath of cop massacre of striking Lonmin miners, 16 August 2012.

After this incident, Spartacist/South Africa issued a statement (reprinted in *WV* No. 1009, 28 September 2012) that noted, "The COSATU bureaucrats fear that other sections of the working class, inspired by this, will take the road of class struggle, thereby upsetting the cosy relationship of the bureaucrats with the capitalists and their government. That's why the Alliance tops are now denouncing the Lonmin bosses for 'caving in' to the wildcat strike." And that's exactly what happened.

Capitalism and Its Black Front Men

Since these strikes broke out, it's not uncommon to read, even in the capitalist press, that over the last 18 years it has been in power, the ANC government has benefited only a small handful of blacks and the rest of them have not been helped. The left organizations—who up until now have been courting one or another wing of the Tripartite Alliance—have been making haste to put a little distance between themselves and the people they have been supporting. This is not true of us, because we consistently opposed the Tripartite Alliance.

When they came into power in 1994, we wrote "Mandela/ANC Front for Racist Capitalist Rule" (*WV* No. 600, 13 May 1994), stressing that black freedom requires socialist revolution. In 1995, we put out one of our *Black History and the Class Struggle* pamphlets (No. 12) with a series on South Africa. One article has a headline, "South Africa Powder Keg: ANC Fronts for Racist Exploiters." We always make available our back literature, unlike many other organizations, because actually we're proud of what we stood on in the past and are not embarrassed by it. We don't seek to cover it up, like many organizations on the left.

Mining magnate Patrice Motsepe, one of three South Africans on *Forbes* 2008 World's Billionaires list.

Now, I talked about the cops attacking the picket line. It's also important to understand, however, that the capitalist ruling class usually doesn't maintain itself in power simply by the use of armed force. They also have ideological weapons. They control the media, they control the schools, etc. If you want to explain why the ANC government has held on the way it has, you also have to understand this aspect. In particular, the ANC has utilized African nationalism as a way of justifying its regime. At bottom, black African nationalism asserts that the common interests of the black population are higher than the class divisions in society.

This is very, very different from the Marxist perspective. A Marxist would argue that class divisions are fundamental. You have two main classes in society: the capitalists (who own the means of production like the factories, the mines, the banks and the land) and the wage workers (who have only their labor power to sell).

Suppose we take a look at what has happened in South Africa. These events demonstrate and confirm that the Marxist perspective is superior for explaining what went on. If you look at the lineup, what do you have? On the one side you have the black workers, who are out on strike. And on the other side you have the mainly black government, black and white cops, and another element: several thousand black people—a small minority of the black population—who were admitted to the elite of South Africa when apartheid ended. Up until that time, there were really no black capitalists. Now it's different. For example, there is a guy by the name of Cyril Ramaphosa [elected the ANC's deputy president in December], who in apartheid days was actually the leader of the NUM mineworkers union. Today he has amassed about $675 million dollars worth of industrial and mining holdings. And he happens to be a major stockholder in Lonmin.

Popperfoto

Sharpeville massacre, 1960: Apartheid police kill 69 men, women and children protesting the pass laws.

So, you have an alliance of the imperialists, the white Randlords with their black junior partners in the government, and the black and white cops. It isn't black against white. The decisive division here is class against class. And this is a very important lesson about how society actually functions.

The Rise of Apartheid

Having said that, it raises a question: Why does black nationalism have the influence that it does? You can't deny that it has had a lot of influence in South Africa. I think in order to explain that you have to first do a little excursion in history. So I'm going to have to do this rather rapidly and I'm going to leave things out.

In the 17th century, Dutch Calvinists and French Protestants settled the country, and they were given the name Afrikaners, the "white African tribe." Later during the Napoleonic Wars, the British decided they needed to at least control the coast, because it was a convenient way station to their most important colony, India. So they seized Cape Town. But nothing much happened and the country was kind of a backwater until the discovery of diamonds and later gold in the second half of the 19th century. At this point, the British took interest.

The British imperialists realized that the gold and diamonds were located in provinces run by the Afrikaners, so they started a war called the Boer War and took over. They had to find people to work in the mines. Up until that time, most of the Africans were subsistence peasants and they raised cattle, etc. So in order to *make* them work in the mines, the capitalists had to take their land away, and some 87 percent of the land in the country was given to the whites. They also had to institute a rigorous system of taxes, like poll taxes, to force the Africans to make money in order to pay taxes; this meant the Africans had to go to work in a mine or someplace like that.

That's how the British did it. Now, there is more to it than that, but that sort of is fundamentally the process. It's important to keep this in mind because, if you talk to liberals, they say everything racist about South Africa was done by the Afrikaners, but this was actually done by the British.

After World War II, the apartheid regime came into power, and it was based on a mainly Afrikaner party called the Nationalist Party. They set up a series of rigorous stratifications of the population, which they divided into whites, mixed-race, Indians and blacks. They had these pass laws, which meant you couldn't go anywhere if you were black unless you were carrying an appropriate pass that gave you permission. Group Areas Acts were also enacted to separate where different so-called "racial categories" could live. This was all kind of a refinement and intensification of what had existed before. What they used the pass laws for was to find a way of getting people to go where they wanted them to work, which were generally places considered least desirable, like the mines and the white-owned farms.

Neo-Apartheid South Africa Today

Today, if you look at the way the mining industry works, a lot of this is still true. Mining is still done by migrants, people who live in other parts of South Africa or in neighboring countries. Men go to work in these mines and once or twice a year they go home and see their family. And it's still among the most dangerous kinds of work that you can do; one miner in South Africa dies every three days. It's extremely difficult work. The mines are deep underground and the temperatures run up to about 115 degrees at the rock face.

There have been some modifications since the apartheid period. They don't depend on pass laws to make people work in the mines, but what they have now is economic compulsion. You've got an official unemployment rate of 25 percent in the country, which is higher among blacks. So people go to work in mines because they have to earn a living; they have to eat.

And there is another important difference. While there are still workers from neighboring countries like Zimbabwe, Lesotho and Mozambique, some years ago the ANC government passed a law making it much more difficult for foreign black workers to work in the mines. We're very much opposed to this discrimination against immigrants. We believe that anyone who gets to a country should have the right to stay there. In other words, we fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants in South Africa and here in the U.S.

The ANC also has a view that South Africa is a "rainbow nation," namely, that all races are going to be treated equally in South Africa. This is not true of blacks and whites and also other sections of the population. Nine percent of South Africans are called the coloured or mixed-race population. They are basically descended from the earlier period when the Afrikaners came and had offspring through unions with the Khoisan people, and then later with Malay women slaves. These people were Christianized and were taught to speak Afrikaans, which is the language of the Afrikaners.

Also in the 19th century the British brought over a number of people from India to work on the sugar plantations there. So one of the things you see today, and you have this in every capitalist country, is that it's not just blacks pitted against whites, but also different layers of the oppressed are pitted against each other. Blacks against the coloureds, Indians and so forth. You don't resolve these differences unless you get rid of capitalism.

If you look at the overall picture, South Africa is a unique society established by European colonialism. It is very different from other countries like India, which was a British colony with only a thin layer of whites who were the top military officers or the top administrators. When the British left, they left too. In contrast, the white population in South Africa is much more substantial and they actually settled the country, and they did it in a particular way. When Europeans settling the U.S. or Canada ran into the indigenous population, they killed them or ultimately drove them onto reservations. Whereas in South Africa, what the settlers did was exploit the native population.

People often make analogies between the race question in South Africa and in the United States. Of course there are parallels there. Many American blacks thought that apartheid was like a magnification or a mirror of their own oppression in this country. At the same time, there are obvious differences, starting with the fact that blacks are a minority here, whereas in South Africa they are the majority of the population. There is another very important difference: although whites in the U.S. on average are better off than blacks, if you look at the working class you have whites, blacks and Hispanics. You go out to a picket line and you're going to see workers from different races and ethnic backgrounds. Whereas in South Africa, it is much more a question of the whites being like a privileged caste. It's more like one race on top of others, which is not saying there aren't a few poor or working-class whites.

So this sort of gets back to the question I raised earlier, which is, why does nationalism have the impact that it does? Because

continued on page 6

Spartacist South Africa Leaflet 23 August 2012

spears and other primitive weapons! We stand forthrightly for the right of *armed self-defence* of the working class against the bloody violence of the capitalist state, the bosses' security guard thugs and other professional strikebreakers. *For workers defence guards to protect the picket lines!* As the bloody massacre showed, the

Democratic Socialist Movement Statement—17 August 2012

was att… ir shot wounds. We stand for workers' right to defend themselves, in a disciplined way. It was a mistake for Lonmin workers to respond by killing first two security guards, on Saturday, and then two police officers on Monday. This did not move the workers' struggle forward but divided it. It gave the police, the mine bosses and the state cover behind which they could crush the strike.

The DSM rebuked Lonmin strikers who defended themselves against police and security guards. The DSM and their affiliates in the Committee for a Workers' International have a long history of embracing cops as part of workers movement.

"Traditional Culture" vs. Fight for Women's Liberation

We publish remarks by Karen Cole and Jon Brule made during the discussion at the Spartacus Youth Club's November 27 class on South Africa. Comrade Karen's intervention sparked a debate with a young South African woman of Zulu origin who decried "cultural dispossession" and argued, "On the question of polygamy and some of the traditional aspects of our culture, the problem has a lot to do with dispossession of land, which has affected our ability to practice our culture the way we used to." She asserted that "traditionally" women asked their husbands for co-wives to help with the housework. She said people get married "in order to build nations, and to look out after national interests," adding, "We have to be careful not to mix Western ideas about what it is about culture." Comrade Jon responded to her arguments in his summary remarks. The transcripts were excerpted and edited for publication.

AFP

A miner's wife in shack near Lonmin's Marikana mine. Over 30 inhabitants of this settlement share two toilets and one water tap.

Karen: The woman question is key to socialist revolution in South Africa. In South Africa, women are specially oppressed. It is common for black women to be forced to be married and men forced to pay a bride price, which is called *lobola*. There is polygamy, both African traditional polygamy and Muslim polygamy. There is child abduction for marriage. There is female genital mutilation. And the migrant labor system itself was a system where women were left back in the most arid, terrible places that no one else wanted, while the men migrated to the mines.

Black women in this country have nothing. They are the slaves of the slaves. The nationalists have no program for them, no solution for liberating these women or the men. In South Africa you have this very democratic Constitution drafted in 1994. It's very, very democratic on paper but it means nothing for women in impoverished areas where there are no hospitals, no doctors, no roads, no electricity, or no running water. The Constitution is just fine words that mean nothing for the material conditions of women.

The only way that can change is through socialist revolution to overthrow the capitalist system and institute a planned economy based on human need, not on private property. That's why we fight for a revolutionary party in South Africa, here in the U.S., in Egypt as well. Everywhere you look in the world, the struggles for the emancipation of the oppressed cannot begin to be addressed without fighting for a planned economy where workers rule.

Jon: I wanted to address the comments by the young woman who spoke. I have some differences with what she said. We are not cultural relativists when it comes to the treatment of women. There are traditions and there are traditions. One of the really horrifying things that happened in South Africa is that the life expectancy there has plummeted by about ten years. This is largely due to the fact that HIV and AIDS are so widespread in that county. The previous ANC president of South Africa did not believe there was a connection between the HIV virus and AIDS. Therefore the regime recommended traditional herbal remedies. The result was quite predictable. There is not a "Western" way of treating HIV or AIDS; there is a scientific way of treating it, whether it is in the West or in Africa.

Similarly with these traditions. I think you really understate how these "traditions" victimize women. *Lobola*, which is otherwise known as bride price, is common in many countries in the world. It is something that we oppose. What it means is that in order for a woman to get married, the husband has to pay. It used to be cattle, now it is generally cash. That is not something that is in the interests of women. When you buy a bride, then she belongs to the husband—that is the trade-off here. It leads to bad things.

Ditto with some of these other questions. Polygamy can mean different things in different societies. But when it's something that's used as a coercive element, as it often is in backward societies where the women don't have a choice, it is not a good thing. If people want to read more, we have a good deal of material on the woman question in South Africa, including the fact—and this is borne out by many statistics—that women are increasingly the victims of a high level of personal violence and rape in that society.

So liberation of women is a fundamental task of a proletarian revolution, just as it was in backward, peasant-dominated Russia where they had to deal with all sorts of similar crap. This is important. I talked about AIDS. Gays and lesbian women who campaigned for decent treatment for AIDS in South Africa were lynched in their communities. I hope people read the material we have on the woman question in South Africa.

South Africa...

(continued from page 5)

race corresponds largely to class in South Africa. If you are poor and working-class, you're much more likely to be black or some other non-white. Therefore, it's very easy to confuse the two conceptions of race and class. When apartheid ended in 1994, there was an enormous expectation among the black masses that not only would they have political rights, but also their conditions of living would improve dramatically. That's not happening.

AP

"Power-sharing" for racist capitalist rule: Nelson Mandela joins Thabo Mbeki (left), later South Africa's president, and former apartheid leader F.W. De Klerk in celebrating new constitution, 1996.

The Deal to End Apartheid

In order to conclude this rather potted history of the country you have to take into account the final period of apartheid in South Africa and recognize that it wasn't about just what went on in the country. There were, to be sure, many militant struggles by workers against apartheid, but there were also other things that happened outside the country that shaped the outcome. One of them was that the countries that are now Mozambique and Angola were Portuguese colonies at the time. The Portuguese colonies got their independence by 1975, and this destabilized southern Africa. That year there was a civil war in Angola, and the South Africans, who considered this part of the world theirs, intervened on one side, while Brezhnev, who was the leader of the Soviet Union, got the Cubans to go in on the side of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA).

We didn't politically support the left-nationalist MPLA, but in this conflict we had a side because it was a proxy war and we wanted to see the Cubans smash the South Africans. They did, and as a result of that a lot of people in South Africa concluded that the South African army was not invincible, as had been claimed. This helped trigger a major upsurge of struggle in South Africa, which broke out around the time of the big student protests in Soweto in 1976. As a result, the regime in South Africa cranked up the level of repression, killing a lot of people and jailing many more.

The regime was not defeated, but it was an extremely expensive way of running the country. The Americans were worried. You have to remember, South Africa was a junior partner of U.S. imperialism this whole time. But the U.S. said, "Well, you know, ultimately you're just going to have to fight the same battles over and over again and, furthermore, the communists in South Africa are gaining influence." So at a certain point, they pulled the rug out from underneath the apartheid regime, or tried to, and they started selling off their stocks and bonds and calling in their loans to the government. They basically said to the apartheid regime, "OK, you guys had better start negotiating with the ANC."

Now nothing much happened for three or four years. Then—we are now reaching the Gorbachev years in the second half of the '80s—Gorbachev starts to give away the store. He gives away East Europe to the imperialists and everybody realizes that, if Gorbachev is going to do that in his own backyard, there is no way that this guy is ever going to establish a client state in Southern Africa. Up until that time, the Soviets had given a modicum of diplomatic support and weaponry for what was basically a tokenistic guerrilla army of the ANC. So at that point the apartheid guys said, "Well, the ANC has nowhere to go now. So we can drive a bargain that's to our advantage." And the ANC basically said, "OK, we'll do it." (For a more detailed account, see "Growth of the Black Workers Movement," *Black History and the Class Struggle* No. 12, February 1995.)

So you got what happened, which was that legally and politically they changed the state in South Africa. Whereas before the end of apartheid, non-whites could not vote in that country, now they got to vote. That's on the one hand. But economically and socially, ***nothing*** changed. Nothing. The same companies that had been running the country previously—like Anglo American, the largest mining company in South Africa—continued to run the country. Except for one thing I alluded to earlier, that a small layer of blacks were now inducted into the elite. Actually, working people in South Africa have a somewhat contemptuous term for these guys. They say they are "riding the gravy train" or they call them "gravy trainers." One example is this character I mentioned before, Cyril Ramaphosa.

SACP: Obstacle to Revolution

The effect of this, however, is that workers in South Africa generally saw the ANC as having liberated people from apartheid. The other important glue here is the SACP, which for years has been an integral part of the ANC. By 1994, overwhelmingly the most militant workers supported the South African Communist Party. This is why they have a thing called the Tripartite Alliance, and this is why the Communist Party is in the government, because it gives the impression that this government, if not a socialist government, is not hostile to socialism and will pave the way for it. They say, "See? We have our comrades from the Communist Party in the government." Now, you would never find that in the United States, would you? You would not find the AFL-CIO made part of Obama's government. The reason is the capitalists don't have to worry. There is no organized political party of the working class in this country, and indeed one could say that the political consciousness of the working class is lower here than it is in South Africa.

The role of the SACP is important because it's the only organized mass

SYC Speaker at NYC Holiday Appeal

Take a Side for a Socialist Future

We print below a speech, edited for publication, by Dianna Faustine of the New York Spartacus Youth Club. The speech was given on December 7 at the Partisan Defense Committee's Holiday Appeal for Class-War Prisoners in New York.

The Spartacus Youth Club is the youth auxiliary of the Spartacist League, and we solidarize with the class-war prisoners, many of whom were thrown into prison when they were around our age because they hated the injustice of this capitalist system.

There is no future for youth in a capitalist system. Young people, particularly black and Latino youth, have been driven from the universities with rising tuition. The bourgeoisie seeks to channel youth anger and militancy into voting for the Democrats, a prettier face of the bourgeois state whose task is to protect the property of the capitalist overlords. Our opponents on the left, some of whom campaigned for Obama in recent elections, seek to pressure the Democratic Party into being less repressive. But the only way forward for youth is to ally with the working class, which is the class that creates all the wealth in society and has the power to shut down capitalist production and smash the bourgeois state.

After Hurricane Sandy some residents, particularly in poor and working-class neighborhoods, are still struggling to get basic needs like food, water and shelter. They have only been able to obtain anything through volunteers, like those involved with the populist movement of Occupy Sandy, which Occupy defines as "people-powered relief." While we are not opposed to those who choose to volunteer, the bourgeoisie hails volunteerism because it's not in the interest of the capitalists to provide genuinely decent living conditions for the masses. Reformist groups like the International Socialist Organization (ISO) have attached themselves to Occupy Sandy as a way to build a liberal "movement." The ISO has its niche in the sellout union bureaucracy and among bourgeois liberals, and is ready to glom onto whatever is moving to shore up the capitalist system.

There's a lot of anger about the outrageous cost of tuition and cutbacks to education. Right now there is a student occupation happening at Cooper Union, a historically free campus where the administration is attempting to impose tuition for the first time in 110 years. There is a racist purge of colleges and universities occurring through tuition hikes. A small number of black and Latino students have had limited gains through affirmative action. But the black-robed purveyors of the injustice system are again in the midst of ruling on its legality because, like all things wrested from the capitalists, these gains are reversible.

Fundamentally, the capitalists only support education insofar as it produces the future maintainers of this anarchic system. Students who are burdened with thousands of dollars of debt (which often can only be canceled by death) live in indentured servitude hell after college, if they can even afford to graduate! We demand: ***Open admissions, no tuition and a state-paid living stipend for all! Abolish the student debt! Nationalize the private universities! Abolish the administration—for worker/student/teacher control of the university! Cops off campus!***

While student struggles have sometimes been the ignition source for social battles especially around youth unemployment and imperialist wars, students have no direct relationship to the means of production and must ally with the working class. There were massive student protests in Quebec around draconian tuition hikes this summer. The working class mobilized in support of the students but the union misleaders and the petty-bourgeois populists of Québec Solidaire channeled anger into Québécois nationalism and bourgeois electoralism. Throughout their courageous struggle, the protesters faced intense police repression. The PDC defends these protesters and we say: ***An injury to one is an injury to all!***

Friedrich Engels wrote that Marxism is not a dogma, but a guide to action, and from that we take our cue. In August we brought students to a PDC-initiated protest against the massacre of South African miners. In late September, the SYC initiated a protest at City College of New York against a speech by war criminal Anders Fogh Rasmussen, Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). NATO is a U.S.-dominated imperialist alliance formed after World War II whose aim was the destruction of the degenerated Soviet workers state. Today these war criminals are responsible for imperialist terror around the world. We say: ***U.S./NATO hands off the world!*** A leading activist for the Freedom Road Socialist Organization in New York stood apart from our anti-NATO protest and refused to join it.

The FRSO [the New York group's split-off in the Midwest, which publishes *Fight Back!*] wrote "it is better to vote against Romney" and we all know that means voting for the lesser evil of the Democratic Party or the Greens—both capitalist parties. Like the ISO, they adapt to prevailing bourgeois consciousness. We fight to break the working class and militant youth from false consciousness and argue for the need to get rid of the whole capitalist system of exploitation, poverty, racism and war.

People may have heard of the recent outrageous death of a woman who was denied an abortion in Ireland. Here in this country both the Democrats and Republicans have carried out a war against abortion rights. Just look at Obama's ban of over-the-counter access to morning-after pills for teenagers! The SYC fights for free abortion on demand, for free public health care for all, and separation of church and state.

We seek to win a new generation of young workers and students to the principles and program of Trotskyism, recognizing that a revolutionary party is built through the fusion of declassed revolutionary intellectuals with the most advanced layers of the proletariat. We do so through exemplary action, as illustrated by our NATO protest and participation in picket lines, and through education like the class series we held this semester on basic Marxism. So, if you don't want to live in a world of war and starvation, in the words of the Harlan County coal miners and the women who bravely stood alongside them fighting for a decent life, ask yourself: "Which side are you on?" ***Join the SYC!*** ■

WV Photo

New York: SYC participates in protest against Marikana massacre, August 2012.

party of the working class. Their theory is a theory of two-stage revolution, which holds that the way to get to socialism is to have an initial stage, which they claim is happening now, and they call it the "national democratic revolution." In this stage they say they are going to do away with racial inequality, but they're not going to get rid of capitalism. Then some time by and by, there's going to be socialism. And in order to do this, according to their view, well of course you go out and join the government now and pressure it to act more and more in the interests of the working class. In fact, they deny that there is a *capitalist* state in South Africa. The term they use is "class contested," implying falsely that the workers could take power without overthrowing the existing state.

This whole conception is a lie, and it has been demonstrated over the last two decades why it's a lie. You don't end up forcing the government to carry out pro-working-class policies. Instead, when you become part of a capitalist government, like the SACP is, you have to take responsibility for the policies of that government, which are premised fundamentally on maintaining capitalist profit. You become complicit and part of anti-working-class atrocities like the massacre at Marikana—which is not the only time the SACP has played a strikebreaking role in South Africa, but it is certainly the most recent and dramatic example.

At the same time, like I said, the expectations of the masses have been dampened. The ANC made all kinds of promises in '94: everyone's going to get a house, electricity, running water, and we'll do away with unemployment. None of this has come about. Inequality, if anything, is probably higher than it was at that time. I think the average white household income is something like 365,000 rand a year, which is about $40,000, compared to 60,000 rand for a black family, which is $6,600 a year. So it's an income ratio of about 6 to 1. And a generation has passed since the ANC came in. It has dawned on people that obviously nothing much has changed.

So to sum up, when you look at two-stage revolution, it's a lie. First of all, the first premise is false: there was no revolution that put an end to apartheid. There was a *deal* that the ANC made with the imperialists and the former apartheid rulers. We have a saying in the International Communist League that two-stage revolution means that in the first stage, you put a nationalist bourgeoisie in power; in the second stage, the workers and the reds get massacred. Well that was Marikana. That's two-stage revolution!

Tasks of a Revolutionary Party

If you persevere in this class series you will study the Russian Revolution. The Russian Revolution is what we stand for; it's our positive example. In 1917 Russia was a country of belated capitalist development, with some of the biggest modern factories in Europe in a mainly backward peasant country, with lots of illiteracy and stuff like that. They didn't have a

continued an page 8

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Iran...

(continued from page 1)

deploy sanctions, cyber-warfare attacks on Iran's nuclear industry, etc., instead of outright military engagement, similarly figuring that they will help topple Syria's bonapartist Assad regime, an Iranian ally, by enforcing sanctions and aiding the reactionary opposition forces. But make no mistake: Behind sanctions stands the threat of war, which Obama reaffirmed last year when he declared that for Iran "all options are on the table." A NATO anti-missile radar system and U.S. Patriot missiles have been installed in neighboring Turkey, while Washington has strengthened its military alliance with several Persian Gulf states that are bitterly hostile toward Shi'ite Iran. And, as it has for years, Iran faces the threat of attack from Zionist Israel—the only nuclear power in the Near East.

Whether or not Iran is moving toward developing nuclear weapons, the fact is that in today's world, possession of nukes is crucial to deterring military attack and resisting imperialist diktat. It is not lost on Tehran that the 2003 U.S.-led invasion of Iraq and last year's NATO bombing of Libya were made all the easier because Saddam Hussein and Muammar el-Qaddafi's regimes lacked such weapons. As Bill Keller notes in the *New York Times Book Review* (13 January):

> "The fact that we invaded Afghanistan while paying court to terrorist-breeding (but nuclear) Pakistan taught Iran that weapons of mass destruction command deference. Then, in the Bush axis-of-evil years, our hard-liners convinced their hard-liners that nothing short of regime change would satisfy Washington.... It would be astounding if Iran didn't at least contemplate acquiring the bomb."

Yet even the possession of nukes is no guarantee of security from attack by U.S. imperialism, with its massive nuclear arsenal and overwhelming military power.

It is the duty of the U.S. proletariat to oppose sanctions and all other means by which "its own" ruling class seeks to impose its diktat around the world. This includes standing for the defense of Iran against any military attack by the U.S. or its ally Israel. As Marxists, our defense of Iran in the military sense does not imply the least political support to the bourgeois Islamic regime, which enforces the fierce

AP

August 2012: Iranian metal workers demand back wages at protest outside Tehran government building.

oppression of women, gays and national minorities and brutally represses labor struggle. But what must be understood is that it is U.S. imperialism that is the greatest danger to the working people and downtrodden of the planet, as it has demonstrated repeatedly: e.g., the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 and its later counterrevolutionary wars in Korea and Vietnam. Nothing short of the overthrow of the capitalist-imperialist system through workers revolution will rid the world of this menace and open the road to a socialist future.

Murder by Sanctions

The cruel effectiveness of the sanctions is based on the domination of world banking, industry and trade by the handful of advanced capitalist countries that constitute the imperialist powers, chiefly the U.S., which acts through its own banks and through its leading role in the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. That domination is enforced through sheer military might, of which the U.S. has had the overwhelming preponderance ever since the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state in 1991-92.

UN sanctions against Hussein's Iraq led to the deaths of some 1.5 million people while hollowing out the country in the lead-up to the imperialist war and occupation. Most of the sanctions' toll was taken on children and the elderly, the most vulnerable to malnourishment and lack of medicine. Speaking of the mass murder by sanctions, Bill Clinton's secretary of state Madeleine Albright infamously declared that this "is a very hard choice, but we think the price is worth it." This cold-blooded calculation was echoed by California Democratic Congressman Brad Sherman in 2010 concerning sanctions against Iran. Dispensing with diplomatic artifice, Sherman offered that "critics also argued that these measures will hurt the Iranian people. Quite frankly, we need to do just that."

While Iran is more populous and powerful than was Iraq and has not experienced the same degree of mortality, it is still a dependent country, with a population that is increasingly suffering under the weight of sanctions. Last year, oil production in Iraq surpassed that in Iran, which had been the world's third-largest oil exporter after Saudi Arabia and Russia. The choking off of Iran's oil exports has spelled catastrophe for a country that normally imports much of its food, machinery and refined oil products. Between late September and early October last year, the value of Iran's currency, the rial, plummeted some 40 percent as inflation spiraled. According to one analysis of Iran's black-market currency exchanges, prices were doubling every 40 days.

The most dramatic impact of the sanctions has been on drugs and medical supplies. Western governments point to waivers in the sanctions that supposedly allow the import of essential medicines. Belying this "humanitarian" claim is the fact that there is no banking channel by which payments can be transmitted to pharmaceutical suppliers abroad. Iranian drug manufacturers, who are dependent on imports for more than half of their raw materials, have to pay with a greatly depreciated currency, when they can pay at all. Meanwhile, hospital equipment is breaking down due to lack of spare parts. The *Washington Post* (4 September 2012) wrote that the effect of sanctions "is being felt by cancer patients and those being treated for complex disorders such as hemophilia, multiple sclerosis and thalassemia, as well as transplant and kidney dialysis patients, none of whom can afford interruptions or delays in medical supplies."

Julian Borger and Saeed Kamali Dehghan report in the London *Guardian* (13 January) that "85,000 new cancer patients are diagnosed each year, requiring chemotherapy and radiotherapy which are now scarce." While more than 8,000 hemophiliacs are finding it harder to get blood clotting agents, some 23,000 Iranians with HIV/AIDS have had their access to vital drugs severely restricted. With outside supplies blocked, the drug market is being swamped with smuggled products of dubious value, much of which arrives on donkeys from Turkey. In the words of the head of the Iranian Hemophilia Society, it all amounts to "blatant hostage-taking of the most vulnerable people by countries which claim they care about human rights."

From the oil fields to the assembly lines and small shops, sanctions have taken an enormous toll on the proletariat. Placing the burden on the backs of workers and the poor, the Ahmadinejad government slashed subsidies for food, gas, electricity and other necessities in 2010. Last year, according to *Iran Labor Report* (10 October 2012), a petition signed by some 10,000 people protesting this economic austerity stated that slim wage increases

South Africa...

(continued from page 7)

two-stage revolution. The Bolsheviks fought against that idea. What happened is that the Bolshevik Party led the masses, including the peasantry, which was the bulk of the population, and made a workers revolution. This is *our* program.

The present situation in South Africa presents an opportunity for Trotskyists. The miners strikes have cast a sharp light on what the ANC-led Tripartite Alliance government is. Keep in mind there is a contradiction in the SACP. The top layer of the SACP really wants to administer capitalism and remain a part of that as they currently are. But many rank-and-file members joined the SACP because they wanted to be communists, as they understood it. We know, we talk to them. Among these people there are those who really don't like the SACP's support for crushing or attempting to crush the mineworkers strikes. A lot of these people would love to get their hands on Lenin's writings. I sold at SACP conferences. Although it is supposed to be a Leninist party, their leadership doesn't make Lenin's works available to them. So you go and you sell there, and your literature table is picked clean of all the Lenin and also Marx and so forth. That wouldn't happen in the U.S.

So what do we call for? We call for a black-centered workers government, which would undertake much needed improvement in the living standards of the black toilers. Such a government would uphold the democratic rights of the coloureds and Indians and those whites who accept a government essentially based on the black working class.

My final point is about why a proletarian internationalist perspective is essential. If you had a revolution in South Africa, the imperialists would seek to strangle it economically and militarily. So a workers government there would have to fight like hell to extend workers power to the advanced industrial countries.

Maybe some of you were at a demonstration we organized in New York a few months ago in defense of the striking mineworkers. This was a concrete act of solidarity designed to underline our commitment to make national liberation and working-class emancipation in South Africa the cause of the whole international proletariat, cutting against bourgeois nationalism in South Africa which falsely holds that workers in the West, and particularly in the U.S., are "bought off" by imperialism. More broadly, this points to the importance of constructing a revolutionary party here in what we call the belly of the imperialist beast and that such a party will take its place alongside its revolutionary comrades in South Africa as part of a Trotskyist international vanguard party. ■

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have been far outpaced by price rises, and that "millions of workers cannot afford their monthly housing costs." As the *Wall Street Journal* (3 January) wrote, "Poor families now go months without eating meat or poultry, which have seen some of the biggest price hikes."

Reporting on the industrial area of Delijan, the *Journal* article also noted that the 2012 sanctions caused many small factories to shut down due to lack of parts for maintaining aging machinery, with many larger plants struggling to avoid bankruptcy. Iran's car industry, the largest in the Near East, posted a 60 to 80 percent decline in production last year, with hundreds of thousands losing their jobs. France's Peugeot carmaker, for example, was forced to suspend sales of assembly kits to Iran because of tighter sanctions.

Iran's Chamber of Commerce now reports that ***67 percent*** of the country's industry has been shut down (*Financial Times*, 16 January). It should not be lost on anyone that U.S. imperialism and its cohorts have, through conscious policy, qualitatively worsened the plight of Iranian workers in the midst of the five-year-long world recession. Brought on by the speculative binges of the finance capitalists of the imperialist centers, that crisis has meant ruin for millions upon millions of workers in the U.S. and around the world. In Iran, cascading unemployment is undermining the ability of the working class to wield its social power, based on its role in production, in its own defense. This underscores the need for the proletariat internationally to oppose the sanctions in support of its Iranian class brothers and sisters.

Iranian Prison House

A big reason for Washington's gloating over the "success" of the sanctions are signs that increased social turmoil is posing a challenge to the Iranian government, which is due to hold presidential elections in June, when Ahmadinejad's term expires. In early October, the Majlis (parliament) struck a political blow against Ahmadinejad by voting to consider halting a second round of subsidy cuts. The vote took place several days after a protest against the government, precipitated by tbe sharp fall in the rial, shook Tehran's main bazaar. This marked the first time in three decades that the bazaar merchants—a highly conservative layer that formed a principal social support for the 1979 "Islamic revolution"—publicly turned against the regime. (The merchants had already been alienated by government policies favoring the business interests of the Revolutionary Guards and others.) The tens of thousands of protesters included many workers, but the protest was firmly under the leadership of the shopkeepers and traders.

The harsh fact is that the Iranian proletariat has never recovered from the historic defeat it suffered with the rise to power of Khomeini and his mullah regime in 1979. What followed was a reign of terror in which trade unionists and any and all forces of the left were simply smashed. Vicious repression continues to this day, with Kurds and many others charged with *moharebeh* (waging war against God) subject to execution.

Jahangir Razmi

August 1979: Kurds and others executed by Iranian mullah regime. Khomeini inaugurated "Islamic revolution" with massacre of minorities, leftists, workers.

Amid rising crime brought on by austerity, on January 20 the regime staged the public hanging of two unemployed men from poor families who had robbed a man of the equivalent of $20 and wounded him with a knife. The *New York Times* (20 January) reports that many in the crowd shouted in protest.

The defeat of the Iranian working class in 1979 was not preordained. Militant struggles by oil workers and other sectors of the proletariat against the Shah's hated U.S.-backed dictatorship had posed the possibility of a fight for workers power. But those struggles were ***betrayed*** by the workers' putative leaders, centrally the Stalinist Tudeh (Masses) party, which led its proletarian base into a bloc with the reactionary Islamists in the name of "anti-imperialism." That treacherous path was followed by almost the entire left internationally, from the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat of Ernest Mandel to the Stalinophobic followers of Tony Cliff. In sharp contrast, the international Spartacist tendency, forerunner of the International Communist League, declared: Down with the Shah! Don't bow to Khomeini! For workers revolution!

To this day, the opportunists of the Cliffite school, who grooved on not only Khomeini's "revolution" but also the war by CIA-backed *mujahedin* cutthroats against the Soviet Army in Afghanistan, have continued to support the forces of political Islam—and/or more-liberal bourgeois nationalists, depending on which way the winds are blowing. (For more on Afghanistan, see article on page 3.) Meanwhile, the reformists of the Workers World Party hail Iran's theocratic regime for supporting such Islamist "liberation movements" as Hamas and Hezbollah. The utter phoniness of Tehran's anti-imperialist credentials can be seen in the fact that as NATO troops occupied Afghanistan early last decade, Iran armed the Northern Alliance forces that fought alongside U.S. troops.

There is and has long been enormous discontent in Iranian society: workers struggling to survive on pitifully low wages; peasants and the unemployed eking out an existence under conditions of intense austerity; women and youth yearning for freedom from deeply oppressive Islamist strictures; Kurds, Azeris, Baluchis and Arabs groaning under Persian chauvinism. However, with the workers movement severely repressed, the most visible opposition to the government comes from reactionaries like the bazaaris or pro-imperialist forces adopting the guise of "reformers." The latter describes the "Green Movement" that led mass protests in 2009 during the rigged presidential elections pitting Mir Hussein Moussavi against Ahmadinejad. A "reform" cleric, Moussavi served as prime minister under Khomeini for eight years in the 1980s, when thousands of leftists, women's rights activists and Kurds were slaughtered in the prisons and buried in mass graves.

As the only class with the social power to sweep away capitalist rule, the proletariat in Iran must begin to emerge as a class fighting for itself and for the liberation of all the oppressed masses. The central lesson of the disaster it suffered more than 30 years ago is that it can do so only by maintaining strict independence from and opposition to all bourgeois political formations, all forms of religious reaction and all imperialist forces. The remnants of the Tudeh party operating in exile continue to trample on this fundamental Marxist principle. In 2009, Tudeh called for support to Moussavi, whose hands are covered with the blood of their own comrades.

In Iran as elsewhere, the key to mobilizing the class power of the proletariat is the leadership of a revolutionary workers party modeled on the Bolshevik Party of V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky, which led the workers to power in Russia in the October Revolution of 1917. The ICL is dedicated to building such parties internationally, not least in the belly of the U.S. imperialist beast, to lead the fight for new October Revolutions. ■

Pakistan...

(continued from page 3)

undertook its biggest covert operation ever, Pakistan played a strategic role. The U.S., Britain, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, among others, armed, funded and trained reactionary *mujahedin* (holy warriors) to kill Soviet soldiers. The Soviet Red Army intervened on the side of a regime that sought to introduce minimal social reforms and faced a *jihad* (holy war) led by reactionary landlords, tribal chiefs and mullahs. That war, in which imperialist-backed forces threatened the southern flank of the Soviet Union, posed an acid test for revolutionaries.

The Soviet intervention was progressive, underlining the Trotskyist understanding that despite its degeneration under a Stalinist bureaucratic caste, the Soviet Union remained a workers state embodying historic gains of the October Revolution of 1917, centrally the planned economy and collectivised property. These were enormous conquests, not least for women and the Muslim peoples of Soviet Central Asia, where conditions before the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution had been as backward and benighted as in Afghanistan. For Afghanistan, which is not a nation but a patchwork of tribes and peoples, with its minuscule proletariat, progress would have to be brought in from the outside. The international Spartacist tendency, now the International Communist League, said: "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!" and called to extend the gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples. In stark contrast, the bulk of the left internationally lined up with the imperialists by denouncing the Soviet "invasion" of Afghanistan. The SWP in Britain criminally stood foursquare with the imperialists. The 12 January 1980 issue of *Socialist Worker* blared, "Troops Out of Afghanistan!" (For fuller treatment of our position on the Soviet Union in Afghanistan and Moscow's treacherous withdrawal, see "Afghanistan: Women Under Imperialist Occupation," *Workers Hammer* No. 219, Summer 2012 [reprinted from *WV* No. 998, 16 March 2012].)

Following counterrevolution in the USSR, the end of the Cold War meant that Pakistan's usefulness to the imperialists was greatly diminished. Pakistan is today subject to U.S. imperialist drone attacks aimed at the Taliban and Al Qaeda—reactionary fundamentalists whose forerunners were created in the 1980s by the Pakistani military and Inter-Service Intelligence as well as the American CIA.

Pakistan, like India, is a prison house of peoples, a legacy of three centuries of British colonial divide and rule that culminated in the partition of the Indian subcontinent. Pakistan's claim to constitute "one nation" of all Muslims masks the domination of the Punjabi ruling class over Pashtuns, Baluchis and other oppressed nationalities. Kashmir epitomises the seething complex of national and communal conflicts that extend from Afghanistan to Pakistan and India. India's brutal repression in Kashmir, the only majority Muslim state in India, gives the lie to New Delhi's claims that it is a secular democracy. The Indian state was founded on naked Hindu chauvinism, and brutal oppression of minorities has been the rule under the Congress Party as well as the avowedly chauvinist BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party). For their part, Pakistan's rulers can ill afford to support independence for Kashmir, which would pose the same question for the minorities within their own borders.

The task of liberating all the exploited and oppressed of the Indian subcontinent demands the forging of Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard parties dedicated to the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisies in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh and the establishment of a socialist federation of South Asia. ■

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Mali...

(continued from page 2)

homes and businesses owned by Tuaregs and other ethnic groups there—including Arabs, many of whom also inhabit the north of the country—while security forces looked on. Last week, as the French military pushed north to confront Islamist forces in the town of Diabaly, Human Rights Watch reported that Malian soldiers in Niono, a town on the road to Diabaly, were again massacring Tuareg and Arab civilians.

The rebel offensive that broke out in northern Mali was an indirect consequence of the imperialists' successful drive in 2011 to oust Qaddafi. Many Malian Tuaregs worked in Libya's oil fields, as well as in Qaddafi's armed forces, as a way to escape from conditions in northern Mali, which successive regimes have left bereft of schools, hospitals and paved roads—to say nothing of job opportunities. In the Sahel region south of the Sahara, almost a quarter of a million children die of malnutrition-related causes each year, according to Oxfam.

With the fall of Qaddafi—and the racist pogroms carried out by imperialist-supported rebels in Libya—those Malian Tuaregs returned home, bringing with them their military know-how and, in some cases, heavy weapons. Many of the arms for the northern Malian rebels have been funneled in by reactionary Islamists who were part of the imperialist-supported anti-Qaddafi forces.

The imperialist onslaught will no doubt deepen the already intense interethnic tensions in the region. These were highlighted in an article in the London *Guardian* (6 July 2012) by its West Africa correspondent, Afua Hirsch. Reporting from a Tuareg refugee camp in Burkina Faso, she wrote that the black NGO staff were refusing to work with the lighter-skinned Tuaregs because they "felt aggrieved by the reputation of the Tuaregs for enslaving black Africans." She noted that this history "still plays itself out in the Tuareg caste system—where 'Bella,' dark-skinned members of the tribe who were once slaves, still occupy the lowest positions." In return, many Malian Tuaregs claim that they have fled their country not only because of atrocities carried out by the army but because Bella militias "are also targeting anyone with light skin."

That interethnic tensions and racial discrimination in the region remain so poisonous today is a legacy of French colonialism, which *reinforced* these and other reactionary aspects of the societies they conquered. After subduing the Tuareg region of what was then called French Sudan in the late 19th century, the colonialists set up a racially discriminatory system that pitted Tuaregs and black Africans against each other. Implementing a policy of divide and rule, the French government encouraged the Tuaregs' traditional supremacy over black Africans. Though the French colonialists largely ended the slave trade in the first decades of colonial occupation, they helped to ensure that black slaves remained subject to their Tuareg masters long afterward. Their system of forced labor and compulsory military service was based on racial criteria, with an exemption for the Tuareg elite.

WV Map

The French also played the Tuaregs off against black Africans—and Algerian nationalists—through their drawing of territorial boundaries. In the 1950s, after it was discovered that the Saharan region was rich in mineral resources, they floated the idea of creating a new French-controlled colony, dominated by Tuaregs and Arabs, and limiting the soon-to-be independent Mali to the overwhelmingly black south. France dropped that proposal, and independent Mali was formed as a powder keg of ethnic tensions between Tuaregs and black Africans, who led the first post-colonial government. Those tensions led directly to the first Tuareg rebellion in 1963 and its brutal repression by the Malian army.

There will be no end to the interethnic bloodshed and abject poverty of the region within the framework of capitalism. Just as the October Revolution in Russia in 1917 opened up the perspective of revolutionary change in the backward regions of Central Asia, the emancipation of the masses in the Sahel and other parts of Africa whose development has been so dreadfully retarded must be linked to the international struggle of the working class for socialist revolution. Proletarian revolution in South Africa, Egypt or other countries in Africa that have experienced significant industrial development would propel social transformation reaching into the most backward areas of the continent. Such a perspective must include the fight for socialist revolution in France and other imperialist centers, where Malian and other immigrant workers can provide a living link to the struggles of the dispossessed in Africa. What is necessary is the forging of Trotskyist vanguard parties committed to the fight for new October Revolutions.

The following is a translation of the LTF leaflet, which was issued on January 11.

* * *

The head of French imperialism, François Hollande, announced tonight a military intervention of the French air force and special forces in Mali as part of a so-called "anti-terrorist" operation. For months now, French imperialism has been looking for a pretext to launch its killers into action in its neocolonial backyard. Today we are told that the reactionary Islamists who now control the north of Mali have supposedly launched an offensive against the rest of the country, and that the Malian army supposedly collapsed when faced with a hundred pickup trucks filled with Islamist forces, thus opening up the road to the south all the way to Bamako. We have no idea what is true or not about this story. Regardless, we denounce the French intervention. ***French military out of Mali and out af Africo!***

For the past year, Mali had been torn by a reactionary civil war in which the international workers movement had no interest in supporting either the military regime in Bamako or the anti-woman Islamists of the north. Now, however, it is necessary to unequivocally defend the people who are being bombed in the north against the neocolonial French military, without giving the least political support to the benighted reactionaries. ***Defend the northern insurgents agoinst the French intervention!***

Today's *New York Times* reports rumors that a French military helicopter was shot down by the northern troops. Any military setback for French imperialism in this operation would weaken it and would thus be a boost to class struggle in France against this capitalist-imperialist government, now led by the Socialist Party and the bourgeois Greens, with the support of the Communist Party (PCF). That is why the working class in France, with its strong component of Malian workers—thousands of whom live in the Paris region—has a vested interest in opposing French imperialism's latest neocolonial military adventure. We can say this even more forcefully because we called on workers not to vote for Hollande as Commander-in-Chief, unlike the PCF and the New Anti-Capitalist Party. As for the [fake-Trotskyist] Lutte Ouvrière, they did not want to choose between abstaining and voting for Hollande.

The current disaster in Mali is the product of a long history of French colonial and neocolonial oppression. French imperialists plundered the country during decades of colonial occupation, marked by the systematic practice of forced labor (only officially abolished in 1946). They then arbitrarily drew the borders of an "independent" Malian state, which only had the bare trappings of sovereignty. The currency, the CFA franc, is directly managed by the Banque de France, which controls its exchange rate as well as deposits. The French imperialist military intervention takes place in what France considers its exclusive preserve. Its purpose is to maintain French imperialist domination in the entire region—and especially to protect the profits of the Areva company, which exploits enormous uranium deposits in neighboring Niger.

The situation in northern Mali today is a direct result of both the oppression of the Tuareg population by the central Malian state and the imperialist intervention in Libya in 2011, which François Hollande and [social democrat] Jean-Luc Mélenchon supported. Not only did this military intervention bring various rival Islamist militias to power in Libya, institutionalizing *sharia* against women, but it also enabled reactionary Islamist groups throughout the region to get arms. When it suits French interests, as in Libya and Syria, Paris promotes the Islamists. But elsewhere, as in Afghanistan and now Mali, they are massacred. This in itself shows the boundless cynicism of the Hollande government and its interior minister Valls when they brandish "Islamic terrorism"—a code word for launching racist police operations in France against a population considered suspect because they are Muslims, in particular workers of North African or West African origin and their families.

Algeria now rightly sees the French intervention directly on its borders as a threat, a first since it gained independence in 1962 after seven years of war. This casts a harsh light on Hollande's "confession" speech [admitting that the French had committed atrocities during the Algerian War] when he traveled to Algeria just a few weeks ago. Meanwhile the war minister, Jean-Yves Le Drian of the Socialist Party, had just honored the memory of General Bigeard, the French general who came to symbolize torture during the Algerian War.

For the last 30 years, Mali has been used mainly as a pool providing ruthlessly exploited labor in France. Thousands of Malian workers in France today are undocumented, even after years of living and working here. Many youth of Malian origin participated in the 2005 revolt of the ghetto neighborhoods and in protests against murderous racist police terror in the town of Villiers-le-Bel. The labor movement must defend the ghetto youth, just as it must oppose the neocolonial adventures of French imperialism. The working class of this country must unite against the abuses carried out daily by the capitalists and their government, which are intent on rolling back workers' gains. Ultimately, there is only one way to put an end to the bloody crimes of the brutal French military in the world: overthrowing the dictatorship of capital in this country through a workers revolution led by a Bolshevik party. ***French troops out of Moli and out of Africo! Down with French imperialism! Down with the Hallande-Duflot capitolist gavernment!*** ■

JSOTF

December 2010: U.S. officer trains Malian government "counter-terrorism" unit.

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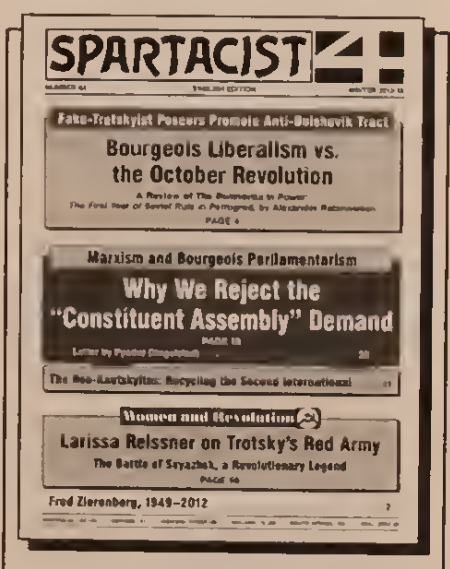

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Abortion...

(continued from page 12)

and expenses that make the process as difficult as possible for both women and doctors. These "salami tactics" include waiting periods, parental consent requirements for minors, ultrasound tests, mandatory disinformation under the guise of "counseling," bans on doctor-patient consults by telephone, the elimination of state funding and restrictions on private insurance coverage. Abortion clinics also are increasingly being made to expand procedure rooms and widen hallways to match ambulatory surgical centers—medically useless but hugely expensive requirements that will force many facilities to shut down. "It's never been this frightening before," the longtime director of a Pittsburgh abortion clinic recently commented on such requirements. "I don't know if we're going to make it" (*Washington Post*, 14 January).

A longstanding goal of the anti-abortion forces is to set up a test case to overturn *Roe v. Wade*. To advance this agenda, the God squad has pushed for "fetal pain" and "fetal homicide" laws that are on the books in many states. On January 11, the Alabama Supreme Court ruled that prosecutors can treat a fetus as an "unborn child," upholding the convictions of two mothers on felony charges of "chemical endangerment of a child" because they had allegedly taken drugs during pregnancy. An anti-abortion bill enacted last month in Michigan originally included a ghoulish provision, ultimately removed, that would have required fetal remains to be disposed of "by means lawful for other dead bodies, including burial, cremation or interment."

The same day as the Alabama ruling, the last remaining abortion clinic in Mississippi missed the state-mandated deadline for its doctors to obtain privileges to admit patients at a local hospital. This requirement was signed into law last year by the governor vowing that it would "end abortion in Mississippi," the state with the highest teen pregnancy rate in the country. No local hospital was willing to affiliate with the clinic, and the state medical journal even refused to run the clinic's ad seeking a doctor with the required privileges.

The legislative assault on abortion rights is backed by harassment of patients and staff at clinics and at times raw terror in the form of bombings and murders. We honor the many courageous doctors and staff whose lives have been taken by the anti-abortion zealots. Most recently, Dr. George Tiller was gunned down in 2009 in Wichita, Kansas, because of the medical services he had provided women, including late-term abortions. The new wave of laws will only embolden the anti-abortion terrorists. Speaking to the fears of many abortion providers, the director of Red River Women's Clinic in Fargo, North Dakota, told *Time*: "Even if I'm at Target looking at clothes, I never let my guard down."

The anti-woman bigots view abortion as a threat to the patriarchal family—the main source of women's oppression—that along with religion is a key prop of capitalist class rule, helping to regiment the population and instill social conservatism. As Marxists, we fight for full democratic rights and social services for women, including ***free abortion on demand***. Unrestricted access to abortion and contraception is essential for all women, including teenagers, to exercise control over whether and when they will have children. There is an urgent need for mass struggle to defend abortion rights.

WV Photo

San Francisco, July 2005: Clinic defense action protected patients from anti-abortion bigots.

Faced with attacks on their livelihoods, benefits and bodies, over two-thirds of single women who cast ballots in the 2012 election voted for Obama. It was not hard for Democrats to pose as allies of women, with Mitt Romney vowing to take steps to overturn *Roe v. Wade* and Tea Party troglodytes spewing on about "legitimate" rape. But although the Republicans may forthrightly prefer to keep women "barefoot and pregnant," the Democratic Party—the other party of racist U.S. capitalism—is no alternative. Obama has pandered to religious reaction, including by reversing the FDA's approval of over-the-counter access to the morning-after birth control pill for teens. In advancing the interests of the capitalist exploiters, both bourgeois parties espouse "family values" that serve to keep women "in their place."

Despite their pro-choice rhetoric catering to higher income and bourgeois women who already have the means to get an abortion if needed, the Democrats have repeatedly slashed access to abortion for working women and the poor. The first major post-*Roe* attack on abortion rights took place under "born again" Democrat Jimmy Carter, who in 1977 sneered, "There are many things in life that are not fair," as he signed into law the Hyde Amendment that eliminated abortion coverage from the Medicaid health plans of 23 million poor women. The Hyde Amendment has been renewed every year since, regardless of whether Democrats or Republicans were in the White House.

The Democratic administration of Bill Clinton carried out a relentless campaign against poor and black women that went virtually unopposed by feminists as long as abortion remained formally legal. In 1996, as part of his campaign to "end welfare as we know it," Clinton signed the "Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act," which slashed benefits for women and children, leaving the most vulnerable members of society to starve and die. Already ground down by the entrenched racial and ethnic oppression and anti-woman bigotry of American capitalism, minority and poor women have been hit especially hard by the attacks on abortion rights. Over two-thirds of U.S. women who have abortions are economically disadvantaged, and black and Hispanic women are more than twice as likely as white women to experience unwanted pregnancies and to have abortions.

For decades, bourgeois feminist groups like the National Organization for Women and NARAL Pro-Choice America have campaigned to elect Democrats to "fight the right" and "save *Roe v. Wade*." Last November, feminists and liberal activists celebrated the defeat of Indiana's Republican U.S. Senate candidate Richard Mourdock, who had outrageously remarked that pregnancies conceived in rape are what "God intended to happen." But the Democrat who beat Mourdock, Joe Donnelly, has bragged that he has "consistently opposed abortion and will continue to do so in Congress."

The war on abortion rights, a battering ram for social and political reaction, is part of the generalized and ***bipartisan*** assault on the rights and living conditions of working people—from union-busting and mass layoffs to skyrocketing medical costs and the shredding of what is left of the social safety net. It is no coincidence that last month's Michigan anti-abortion package came out of the same "lame duck" legislative session that enacted a union-busting "right to work" law (see article in *WV* No. 1015, 11 January).

It is in the interest of the working class, with its hands on the wheels of production, to use its social power to fight to defend itself as well as the rights of women and all the oppressed. Such struggles must be waged independently of all the capitalist parties as part of the fight for free, quality health care for all, along with 24-hour childcare facilities at work and in the community. With untold millions of American families staggering from wage cuts, pink slips and home evictions amid the seemingly intractable economic downturn, it is clearer than ever that the capitalist rulers do not accord living children the same solicitous concern as the fetus.

The legalization of abortion 40 years ago was the product of the tumultuous struggles of the 1960s, especially the fight for black equality and the Vietnam anti-war movement, which were catalysts for the women's rights movement of that era. In the face of class and social struggle, the capitalist class may cede some reforms. But the only way to ensure those gains are not undone is for the working class to wrest power and the wealth of society from the capitalist rulers. Women's emancipation can be realized only with the victory of proletarian revolution, which will smash all forms of social oppression, lay the material basis to free women from age-old family servitude and reorganize society in the interests of all. The Spartacist League/U.S. is committed to fighting to build a revolutionary workers party to lead that struggle. ■

NYC Strike...

(continued from page 12)

many bids came in from low-wage, non-union companies. Abetted by the editors of the city's tabloid press, bizzoner used children dependent on bus transport as pawns in his union-busting game. A large fraction of them also had special needs, which Koch tried to wield as a cudgel against the strikers. As we noted at the time:

> "Many unions, faced with tear-jerking stories of home-bound wheelchair-confined children, would have buckled under. But the Amalgamated Transit Union Locals 1181 and 1061 refused to budge....
>
> "When a number of the offending cabs [used to transport students] were subsequently found with their windshields broken and tires slashed, New York's war of the crippled children was on."
>
> —"Is There Anything Koch Won't Do?" (*WV* No. 226, 2 March 1979)

The Koch administration went on to commandeer chauffeured city vehicles and prison vans from Rikers Island to replace the garaged buses. But the union answered every move by the city with hard-nosed class struggle. Picket lines remained solid, and other scab vehicles ended up just like the taxis. Strikes were breaking out across the city, giving the bosses and their mayor plenty to worry about—sanitation workers refused to cross picket lines of apartment house workers, striking tugboat crews kept boats at bay, and picketing Teamsters milk drivers left the milk to be dumped down the drain. Having wasted $10 million trying to break the strike, the city finally buckled, and the ATU won the EPP.

The same kind of boots-on-the-ground labor solidarity would go a long way toward beating back the union-busters today. A good step would be for other unions, beginning with Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100, the UFT and Teamsters, to swell the ATU picket lines and help extend them to every depot gate. The school bus drivers and matrons have some 300,000 potential allies in city unions who are working without a contract or under a contract extension. The president of Teamsters Local 854, which also organizes bus workers, has pledged to honor picket lines. At the same time, buses driven by Teamsters, as well as non-union drivers, have kept on rolling, pointing to the need for mass pickets to keep *all* buses locked up tight. If the ATU is defeated, it is only a matter of time before the city takes it to the Teamsters. The two unions should have a common contract expiration date to facilitate joint class struggle.

The lineup against Local 1181, the largest ATU local in the nation, includes not only City Hall and the bus companies but also Democratic Party politicians and the courts, cops and labor boards of the class enemy. Union officials representing NYC public workers, from the subways to the classroom, would like nothing better than to elect a "friend of labor" Democrat to replace Bloomberg later this year. But the Democrats, no less than the Republicans, are a party of capital. Among the favored Democratic mayoral candidates is NYC Comptroller John Liu, who last week issued an official statement defending the EPP. But last year Liu approved new school bus contracts covering pre-kindergarten children ***without*** the EPP after Cuomo had vetoed a bill, at Bloomberg's urging, that would have mandated its inclusion.

A 2011 New York State court ruling opened the door to this rollback of the EPP and gave the mayor a club to wield against the union. The bosses' state—including the courts and cops—is an instrument of coercion that safeguards their interests. To date, the NYPD has arrested at least two ATU supporters, including a striker who tried to block a departing scab bus in the Bronx, underscoring that the cops are ***strike-breakers***, not "workers in uniform." It is crucial for labor to rally to the defense of any arrested striker.

Meanwhile, the bus companies have turned to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to put an end to the strike. Time and again, whether composed mainly of Democratic or Republican appointees, the NLRB has stepped in to demobilize labor struggle. When longshoremen fought an attempt by the EGT grain exporter to introduce scab labor at a new terminal in Longview, Washington, in 2011, the NLRB filed an injunction to stop "aggressive picketing" and later sought massive fines against the union. Last year, Local 1181 fended off an earlier unfair labor practices case brought by the city. Yet the labor tops would have trade unionists believe that Obama's NLRB can be made to work for them.

By the same token, the union bureaucrats bow before the supposed good will and omnipotence of the capitalist state and the labor law it enforces. A case in point is the Taylor Law, which forbids New York State public employees from using their strike weapon. Out of labor's struggles, a new leadership must emerge that is independent of all capitalist parties and committed to the policy of class struggle. ***Victory to the school bus workers strike!*** ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

Forty Years Since *Roe v. Wade*
Defeat the War on Abortion Rights!

AP

Voisin/Washington Post

Left: Religious zealots pray outside Mississippi's only abortion clinic in Jackson, July 2012. Right: Woman examined at Pittsburgh clinic targeted by anti-abortion protest and recent legislation, December 29.

For Free Abortion on Demand!

On 22 January 1973 the U.S. Supreme Court legalized abortion in its historic *Roe v. Wade* decision. The Bible thumpers immediately launched a counteroffensive, and not long after, the federal and state governments began to chip away at abortion rights. Over the last two years, Republican-controlled state legislatures, with the support of some Democrats, have passed an unprecedented barrage of anti-abortion measures across the country. Although he lauded *Roe* on its last anniversary, President Barack Obama signed an executive order in 2010 to "ensure" that federal funds from his signature health care plan "are not used for abortion services."

The existing arsenal of state and federal restrictions has all but eliminated abortion as an option for many women. As a *Time* magazine cover article titled "What Choice?" (14 January) notes: "The number of abortion providers nationwide shrank from 2,908 in 1982 to 1,793 in 2008, the latest year for which data is available. Getting an abortion in America is, in some places, harder today than at any point since it became a constitutionally protected right 40 years ago this month."

The wave of state anti-abortion measures, which include 92 enacted in 2011 and 43 in 2012, aims to whittle away abortion rights piecemeal by piling up delays

continued on page 11

Victory to NYC School Bus Workers Strike!

JANUARY 22—The 8,800 school bus drivers and matrons of Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 1181 hit the picket lines at depots around New York City last Wednesday in their first strike since 1979. The pickets are braving freezing weather to defend the Employee Protection Provisions (EPP) won in that hard-bitten 12-week battle. Over the last two years, billionaire mayor Michael Bloomberg has sought to shred the EPP, which provides a measure of job security for the workforce by requiring the private bus companies chartered by the city to hire according to seniority. Even as Bloomberg rails against supposedly illegal "job guarantees that the union just can't have," he has solicited new bids for bus service without the EPP in an unvarnished attempt to bust the union. With the city rulers putting the squeeze on working people throughout NYC, every public worker, every trade unionist and everyone who struggles to make ends meet has a stake in the outcome of the strike.

WV Photo

January 16: Striking ATU 1181 members picket outside school bus facility in Bronx.

The mayor's union-busting scheme is said to aim to cut the city's "irrational" busing costs and comes wrapped in "concern" for special-needs and other students. The real extent of this concern was on display when Bloomberg was shutting down public schools and slashing millions from education programs. For all the howling against the strike in the bourgeois media, it is popular among many parents, who entrust their children to the care of these dedicated workers every weekday and blame the effects of the walkout on the city. The wages of the ATU membership, which represents a cross-section of the city—black, white, Latino, Caribbean and East European—average only $35,000 a year, a figure that City Hall wants to slash. In the process, the mayor is hoping to set a precedent for ripping up union contracts and getting away with it in NYC, a historic labor stronghold.

The city's assault on the education workforce extends to some 75,000 members of the United Federation of Teachers (UFT). Together with Democratic governor Andrew Cuomo, Bloomberg is hell-bent on gutting seniority rights by imposing an evaluation system that would allow it to dismiss "ineffective" teachers. The Obama administration has intervened in this dispute—by threatening to withhold $700 million from the state if some such scheme is not soon in place. Indeed, the White House has led a nationwide war against teachers unions, marked by an expansion of non-union charter schools, longer workdays and raises keyed to student test scores. Obama himself endorsed the mass firing of all 93 teachers in a Rhode Island town because they resisted such "reforms." Seeing no profit in educating black and Latino urban youth or others they deem superfluous, the racist capitalist rulers have driven U.S. public schools into ruin and then held the teachers unions responsible.

Bloomberg appears to be taking his cue from the 1979 strike, and the union would do well to borrow a page from its own history, too. Back then, the vicious, labor-hating Democratic mayor Ed Koch provoked a strike by seeking to eliminate job protections for the bus drivers and matrons. When Koch's school chancellor put the service contract out to bid for the first time in eight years,

continued on page 11

WORKERS VANGUARD

50¢

No. 1017

8 February 2013

India: Deadly Rape Sparks Mass Protests

Hindustan Times

New Delhi, December 21: Protest outside president's residence following gang rape of young woman.

For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

The heinous gang rape and mutilation of a 23-year-old paramedical student in Delhi on December 16, who later died of her injuries, sparked a momentous wave of protests against the oppression of women in India. Demonstrations erupted in many of India's cities, including Kolkata (Calcutta), Mumbai, Bangalore, Panaji and beyond. Significantly, demonstrations were also held in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka, where women face conditions similar to those in India.

The epicenter of the protests was Delhi, which prides itself on being part of the "new" India, where shopping malls and night clubs exist side by side with massive slums. In fact, the capital has the highest recorded incidence of rape of any major city in India. Demonstrations by students and other youth continued for days, courageously defying repression by the police who attacked with water cannons, tear gas and *lathi* (bamboo sticks).

Anger among women intensified with an outburst of grotesque anti-woman chauvinism that sought to blame the victim for the crime. M.L. Sharma, a lawyer for one of the five accused, stated that "respectable" women do not get raped, while the Indian president's son, Abhijeet Mukherjee, baited the demonstrators for being "painted" and "dented," i.e., "Westernized" and not young. A leader of the fascistic Hindu-chauvinist Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) declared that sexual crimes "hardly take place in Bharat but occur frequently in India" (*Wall Street Journal*, 8 January). The RSS is connected to the Hindu-supremacist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which openly espouses *Hindutva* ("Hinduness"), a toxic mix of nationalism and religious obscurantism, to stoke violent pogroms, particularly against Muslims.

The term "Bharat," the Hindi word for India, harks back to an imagined past of idyllic rural life—as opposed to urban India, which is supposedly blighted by decadent Western influence, especially on women. The reality of life for most people in Indian villages is extreme poverty and brutal caste oppression. In the countryside, rape of *dalit* (so-called "untouchable") women is considered a matter of caste privilege by "upper" caste men, who use rape as a weapon in the subjugation and humiliation of the woman and of her entire caste. A March 2006 study of violence against *dalit* women by the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights reported that out of 500 women studied, 116 had been raped or gang-raped; among the perpetrators, "dominant caste landlords emerged as the most prominent group."

Police often assist vigilante groups which conduct raids on entire *dalit* villages, burning homes and raping women. The scope of such violence is captured in a November 2012 incident in Tamil Nadu, where 148 *dalit* houses were torched by a 2,500-strong mob because of a non-*dalit* woman who had married a *dalit* man in secret. Police also rape and murder with impunity as part of the military offensive in areas such as Chhattisgarh in eastern India, where it is directed against a Maoist insurgency based on the *adivasi* (tribal) people. In Kashmir, the occupying Indian Army uses murderous violence, including rape, to subjugate the Muslim population, with the perpetrators exempted from prosecution by the Armed Forces Special Powers Act. In 1991 in Kunan Poshpora, units of the Indian Army gang-raped nearly 100 Kashmiri women, aged 13 to 80, in a single night.

In many ways, the Delhi rape victim symbolizes a layer of young urbanized women who have been drawn into higher education and into the workforce as part of India's recent economic growth. Her father migrated to Delhi three decades ago from rural Uttar Pradesh, one of the poorest states in India. His daughter recently qualified as a physiotherapist and, like countless others, worked in a call center and liked Western clothes. Breaching taboos, she went to the movies the night she was attacked with a companion who is from a Brahman caste, whereas her family comes from an agricultural caste.

The increase in violence against women in Indian cities is part of a reactionary backlash against this layer of young women, who have some possibility of upward social mobility and are relatively privileged compared to the impoverished masses. In the "new" India, women who wear high heels and short skirts, or who think they have the right to choose their own friends and even marry outside their own caste, are perceived as a threat to traditional morality, the institution of the family, Hindu religious domination and the caste system that is endemic to rural life.

The issue of women's liberation is explosive in India and indeed in the whole subcontinent. The fight for the most basic needs of women—for literacy, education, contraception, an end to forced marriage and a way out of grinding poverty and hideous caste oppression—means a struggle to root out the very deepest foundations

continued on page 2

The Central Park Five and Racist Capitalist Injustice

See Page 4

India...

(continued from page 1)

of capitalist society. India's burgeoning economy has created untold wealth for a few, while further immiserating the vast majority of the population. In the countryside, millions are being driven off the land and into the cities to live in unspeakable squalor in sprawling slums. These social conditions in India underscore that women's liberation poses nothing less than the need for socialist revolution.

Cops: Deadly Enemies of Women and All the Oppressed!

The antirape protests represented a cry of rage against the treatment of women in India. At the same time, many of the demands raised have a reactionary "law and order" thrust, which were echoed by the reformist left. A case in point is the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI[M]), which called to strengthen the hand of the capitalist state, namely the cops and courts. Having grotesquely sent a message of condolence for a policeman who died during the vicious cop repression of the Delhi protests (since removed from its Web site www.cpim.org), the CPI(M) in a January 4 statement urged the government-appointed Verma Committee to introduce "rigorous life imprisonment till death" for rape and to "recruit many more women police personnel."

Coming from the party that administered the capitalist state in West Bengal for decades, siding with the cops is hardly news. In 2006, the CPI(M)-led government carried out a campaign of bloody repression against poor peasants in Singur and Nandigram on behalf of Tata Motors, one of India's largest capitalist conglomerates (see "The Political Bankruptcy of Indian Stalinism," *WV* No. 993, 6 January 2012).

Reuters

Women laborers at brick kiln in village in north India, 2008.

We oppose any increase in the repressive powers of the capitalist state that may be introduced under the pretext of protecting women. Make no mistake, bourgeois measures to make it easier to obtain convictions for rape will be used primarily to convict *dalits*, Muslims and the poor in general, who are often punished for rape and other crimes committed by members of dominant castes and the police.

The perspective peddled by feminists and the reformist left of looking to the capitalist state to guarantee the protection of women invariably finds expression in demands for more or better-trained cops on the streets. The fake-Trotskyist New Wave Group, affiliated with the Morenoite International Workers League, published a January 19 statement proposing "more representation of women in police" (www.litci.org). Similar rhetoric pushing "extensive gender and sexuality sensitization programmes for the police and judiciary" (www.radicalsocialist.in, 20 January) comes from the Radical Socialist group, affiliated to the former United Secretariat. Particularly in India, illusions that the police will protect women from rape are obscene, and can be deadly: women are as likely to be raped by the cops as by anyone else. Police stations are notoriously dangerous for women who go there alone.

The explosive nature of any attempt to fight against the oppression of women in India gives the lie to the liberal pipe dream of effecting a gradual transition to equality for women through reliance on the state and its laws. Indeed, women's equality is already enshrined in the Indian constitution, for all the good that does. The burning issues facing women pose questions that only proletarian revolution can answer.

The literacy rate for Indian women as a whole is scandalously low at 48 percent (compared to 73 percent for men). According to a UNICEF study, *90 percent* of marriages are arranged (across all major religions and castes). The divorce rate is 1.1 percent, compared to nearly 50 percent in the U.S. Particularly onerous on women is the ancient and widespread practice of dowry—an amount of money, goods or property the bride's family is forced to contribute to her marriage. The dowry system renders girls a financial burden on the family, thus it fuels selective abortions (for those who can afford both the test and the abortion). Given the lack of availability of abortion services for most women, female infanticide is common. "Dowry deaths"—i.e., murders of wives by husbands or mothers-in-law—are on the rise. The official figure for dowry deaths in 2008 is 8,172, but according to the International Society Against Dowry and Bride-Burning the actual figure could be three times as high. Of course, the practice of dowry has been prohibited by law since 1961—so much for the liberal notion that rape and violence against women can be ended by legislation.

Also rampant throughout South Asia is "honor" killing—women murdered by their own relatives for transgressing the strictures of acceptable sexual behavior, particularly sexual relations outside of marriage or cross-caste relationships. In some cases, rape victims have been murdered. Frequently in India, rape victims are coerced into marrying the rapist to preserve "honor." Common among Hindus as well as Sikhs and Muslims, honor killings are the most brutal form of family control over women's sexuality.

This notion of honor is based on the assumption that women are nothing but chattel, the property of their fathers and husbands, to be disposed of at will. As Friedrich Engels, in his classic work *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1884), observed: "In order to make certain of the wife's fidelity and therefore of the paternity of the children, she is delivered over unconditionally into the power of the husband; if he kills her, he is only exercising his rights." The family is the central pillar of women's oppression and, along with religion, a key prop to the capitalist order.

The emancipation of women, which is strategic to liberating all of the downtrodden of India and the subcontinent as a whole, requires the program of ***permanent revolution***. The working class, leading the peasantry and all the oppressed masses, must seize power through socialist revolution, reorganize society on the basis of collectivized property and extend the revolution internationally, especially to the imperialist centers. The historical model for this is the great October 1917 Revolution in Russia led by the Bolshevik Party of V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky. The fight for women's liberation is strategic to this perspective.

Imperialist Subjugation, Patriarchy and Caste

India does have a significant proletariat—in auto plants, mines, steel plants, railways, textiles and machine manufacturing. The Indian capitalists and the imperialist powers to which they are beholden are well aware of the potential power of the working class. Last year, workers who carried out a series of bitter strikes at Maruti Suzuki, India's largest auto maker, in Gurgaon near Delhi, were hit with severe state repression.

The labor of the proletariat produces the wealth that enriches the Indian ruling class and the international bankers. But this potential power is hamstrung by the existing leaders of the working class. A working class that is divided by caste, religion and ethnicity is further fractured into competing unions affiliated to political parties. What is essential is forging a revolutionary Marxist leadership that fights for proletarian unity and class independence. The class-conscious proletariat must take up the struggle for the emancipation of women and place itself at the head of all the oppressed, winning the rural masses to its side by championing agrarian revolution to overthrow the landlords and capitalists.

India is a classic example of "combined and uneven development." More than six decades after independence, and despite its economic "miracle," it remains predominantly rural—out of a population of 1.2 billion, a staggering 72 percent live in villages where conditions are wretched. Caste oppression is enforced through the *panchayat* system of village councils that dictate what is acceptable in all aspects of social relations. These councils have the authority to punish anything from cross-caste marriages to violations of dress codes for women. Women's liberation and the destruction of the caste system are inextricably bound together.

The persistence of rural backwardness is the legacy of British colonial rule, which exploited, retarded and dismembered the country. India's transition from precapitalist society did not lead to the dissolution of patriarchal and caste relations because colonial domination preserved, manipulated and reinforced them. The British East India Company seized Indian territory by taking advantage of strife between local princes and fanning ethnic, religious, tribal and caste antagonisms. Colonial plunder enriched the ruling class in

continued on page 7

The Early Communist Party and the Fight for Black Liberation

TROTSKY

LENIN

In the face of the traditional indifference to black oppression among American socialists, the Bolsheviks struggled to convince Communists in the U.S. to recognize the special oppression of black people as a matter of strategic importance. In 1920, at the Second Congress of the Communist International held in Soviet Russia, Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin personally urged that American Communist John Reed speak on the "Negro Question." Reed's speech and the Communist International's fight against special oppression are carried forward in the Spartacist League program.

If we consider Negroes an enslaved and oppressed people, we confront two problems: on the one hand, that of a strong racial and social movement; on the other, that of a powerful proletarian labor movement that is rapidly gaining class consciousness. Negroes have no demands for national independence. All movements among the Negroes aiming for separate national existence fail, as did the Back to Africa movement of a few years ago. They consider themselves first of all Americans at home in the United States. That makes it very much simpler for Communists.

For American Communists the only correct policy toward the Negroes should be to see them primarily as workers. Despite the Negroes' backwardness, the tasks posed for agricultural workers and tenant farmers in the South are the same as those we must solve with respect to the white agricultural proletariat. Communist propaganda work can be carried on among Negroes working in industry in the North. In both sections of the country every effort must be made to organize Negroes into common labor unions with the whites. That is the best and fastest way to break down race prejudice and foster class solidarity.

But the Communists must not stand aloof from the Negro movement for social and political equality, which is spreading quickly among the Negro masses today as race consciousness grows rapidly. Communists must use this movement to point out the futility of bourgeois equality and the necessity of social revolution—not only to free all workers from servitude but also as the only means of freeing the Negroes as an enslaved people.

—John Reed at Second Congress of the Communist International, Session 4, 26 July 1920, reprinted in John Riddell (ed.), *Workers of the World and Oppressed Peoples, Uaite!* Volume One (1991)

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In the Service of Opportunism
Cliffites Disappear Their Support to Egypt's Morsi

"The victory of Morsi, the Muslim Brotherhood candidate, is a great achievement in pushing back this counterrevolution and pushing back this coup d'etat. For now, this is a real victory for the Egyptian masses and a real victory for the Egyptian revolution."

—Revolutionary Socialists founding member Sameh Naguib, quoted in *Socialist Worker* (U.S.), 9 July 2012

* * *

"Today all the masks fell from Mohamed Morsi and his Muslim Brotherhood organisation, who trade in revolution and for whom the revolution is nothing but a means to reach the seat of power. They and the remnants of the old regime are two sides of the same coin, which is tyranny and enmity towards the people."

—"Statement by Egypt's Revolutionary Socialists in response to president Morsi's constitutional declaration," 24 November 2012

* * *

How do the British Socialist Workers Party (SWP), the Egyptian Revolutionary Socialists (RS, aligned with the SWP) as well as their somewhat estranged American cousins of the International Socialist Organization (ISO) explain this "victory" turning into its opposite within the space of some five months? They don't. With anger at the murderous regime erupting in the streets, the supporting role of the RS in the Islamist victory, including its formal endorsement of the Brotherhood's candidate in the 2012 elections, is now conspicuously absent from the RS's narrative of "the revolution that—unfortunately—placed Morsi on the seat of power" (*Socialist Worker* [U.S.], 30 January).

It is grotesque that ostensible Marxists would *ever* support religious fundamentalists, who want to turn the clock back on human progress to the benighted past of the seventh century. The Brotherhood would groove on the violent smashing of the unions and the spectacle of all women donning the *niqab* (full-face veil). Predictably, in power the Islamists moved to arrest strike organizers and trample on the rights of women and Copts. Crackdowns were unleashed on mass protests roiling the country, first sparked by a presidential power grab in late November and again beginning on January 25, the anniversary of the upheaval that ousted the hated dictator Hosni Mubarak. In clashes across Egypt last week, police fired wildly at protesters, beat them and lashed out with deadly force, leaving over 50 people dead and hundreds injured. Among the victims

28 May 2012 statement by Revolutionary Socialists endorsing Muslim Brotherhood candidate Morsi.

is a member of the Revolutionary Socialists, 17-year-old Ahmad Sami, who was shot dead in Port Said, one of three Suez Canal provinces placed under martial law and a curfew.

Although the call for a vote to Morsi caused some anguish among its membership, the RS along with its Cliffite cothinkers in the SWP went to great lengths to defend this crime as "a blow against the old regime" (*Socialist Worker* [Britain], 2 June 2012). Endless nonsense was churned out comparing the Brotherhood to mass reformist workers parties, for which the tactic of critical electoral support can sometimes have relevance. Timid demurs from the no less opportunist ISO were dismissed, and charges of "Islamophobia" were hurled at critics. After the elections, the Islamist government was hailed as a "transitional stage" for "our revolutionary project."

Such arguments are not just some simple mistake now best forgotten. From its formation in 1995, the RS courted the Muslim Brotherhood and invested these clerical reactionaries with "anti-imperialist" credentials. In doing so, it drew inspiration from the late SWP leader Chris Harman's *The Prophet and the Proletariat* (1994), which retailed all manner of supposedly promising "contradictions" within the Brotherhood and like-minded deadly enemies of workers, women and religious minorities. The watchword was: "With the Islamists sometimes, with the state never."

Reuters

Cairo, January 29: Protesters confront Morsi's riot police near Tahrir Square on fifth day of massive anti-regime demonstrations.

Since losing its enthusiasm for the president, the RS has flirted with the National Salvation Front, a lash-up of Morsi's bourgeois rivals, such as liberal democrat Mohamed ElBaradei, Nasserite nationalist Hamdeen Sahahi and former Mubarak foreign minister Amr Moussa. On January 26, the RS issued a statement that calls on "revolutionary youth in the Front to fight for the cleansing of its ranks" of the most inconvenient bloc partners, namely the despised "remnants of the old regime" like Moussa. Far less discerning is ISO hack Ahmed Shawki, who offered that "the forces united in the National Salvation Front represent, in many inchoate ways, the emergence of the second stage of the Egyptian revolution" (*Socialist Worker* [U.S.], 12 December 2012).

As we observed in "Pandering to Reactionary Muslim Brotherhood" (*WV* No. 974, 18 February 2011): "Tailing the Muslim Brotherhood today certainly does not prevent the Cliffites from keeping open the option of capitulating to 'secular' Arab nationalism." By the same token, the present turn away from the Brotherhood does not prevent them from continuing to capitulate to political Islam, including the more hardline Salafists.

Last week, the Front joined the Salafists in pushing for a "national unity" government to restore stability. Even as he warned of dire consequences if the protests were not ended, Morsi's defense minister, General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, intoned: "The army's deployment in Port Said and Suez provinces aims to protect the vital strategic interests of the state, at the forefront of which is the vital Suez Canal" (*Irish Times*, 29 January). Whether the Morsi regime remains intact or is replaced by another form of capitalist class dictatorship, deepening economic desperation and harsher imperialist-dictated austerity measures backed by the repressive state apparatus awaits the mass of the population.

To reverse the miserable conditions of life in neocolonial Egypt the proletariat, standing at the head of all the oppressed, must emerge as a contender for power in its own name. Right after the popular uprising that toppled Mubarak, which was capped by a wave of strikes, we noted: "The indispensable instrument for the working class to take the lead is a proletarian revolutionary party, which can be built only through relentless struggle against all bourgeois forces, from the military to the Brotherhood and the liberals who falsely claim to support the struggles of the masses" (*WV* No. 974, 18 February 2011).

Apostles of Defeat

Particularly since the fall of Mubarak, the RS has become a pole of attraction for young activists who have displayed heroism on the streets. But the program of the Revolutionary Socialists is to subordinate the working masses to whatever capitalist force looks more popular at any given moment, notwithstanding their special fascination with the Islamists. Two years ago, when the military was directly taking power, these reformists fed rampant illusions in the army, which is at the core of the repressive machinery of the capitalist state.

While allowing that the ruling Supreme

continued on page 11

Lynne Stewart's Life in Danger

In order to receive urgently needed medical treatment for cancer that has spread to her lungs and back, 73-year-old radical lawyer Lynne Stewart requires immediate release from the federal dungeon in Texas where she is serving a ten-year sentence. The authorities have denied Stewart's request to be transferred to the New York City hospital that previously treated her. ***Free Lynne Stewart now!***

Stewart was already battling breast cancer when she entered prison in 2009 after being convicted in 2005 for her zealous defense of her client, a blind Egyptian cleric imprisoned for an alleged plot to blow up New York City landmarks in the early 1990s. In 2010, a judge quadrupled her original 28-month sentence at the instigation of the Obama administration. As we noted then, "The resentencing is for all intents and purposes a death sentence" (*WV* No. 962, 30 July 2010). Convicted along with Stewart were her translator, Mohamed Yousry, who has finished his sentence, and her paralegal, Ahmed Abdel Sattar, who is locked up for 24 years. ***Stewart, Yousry and Abdel Sattar should never have been charged and should not have spent a minute in jail!***

The capitalist rulers have had it in for Stewart for her decades of vigorous legal defense of radicals, black militants and the poor. Indeed, the resentencing was explicitly based on her "lack of remorse" as well as draconian "anti-terror" guidelines that are part of a wholesale assault on civil liberties. Ralph Poynter, Stewart's husband, has related that even in prison she has remained unbowed and given assistance to other prisoners appealing their sentences.

Stewart also witnessed the death of a prisoner on dialysis while helping her try to get to the nurses' quarters; the prisoner's pleas for help had been ignored. Afterward, Stewart told her husband, "I do not want to go that way" (takingaimradio.com, 6 November 2011). Stewart's daughter, Dr. Zenobia Brown, has noted that it took almost four months before Stewart was able to see an oncologist after the return of her cancer was detected.

A January 21 letter by the Partisan Defense Committee to prison authorities demanded "that Lynne Stewart be released forthwith to receive all necessary medical care and be with her family." We encourage others to send letters of protest to: Warden Joe Keffer, FMC Carswell, Federal Medical Center, P.O. Box 27137, Fort Worth, TX 76127; Charles E. Samuels, Jr., Director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons; and U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder.

The Central Park Five and Racist Capitalist Injustice

For black and Latino youth in New York City, the walk home from school, an errand run to a corner grocery or even standing in front of one's own residence carries the risk of being stopped, shoved up against a wall and interrogated by the cops. Some are then thrown into the "system"—arrested, handcuffed, either coerced into pleading guilty or standing trial in the rigged "justice" of the racist capitalist courts, only to emerge from prison years later, with no hope of a job, public housing or any other social service necessary for survival. A sudden movement, word of protest or facial expression not to the cops' liking can be a death sentence on the spot. Although most are able to walk away, it is just a rain check until the next humiliating encounter.

This scene played out nearly 700,000 times last year under the ruthless "stop and frisk" operations of NYC mayor Bloomberg and his top cop Raymond Kelly. So widespread are the NYPD's brutality and violations of civil rights, the cops cost the city some $100 million in lawsuits during fiscal year 2011. Such claims jumped by over 20 percent last year. The most prominent case pending is a $250 million federal civil rights lawsuit filed ten years ago by the "Central Park Five"—Yusef Salaam, Antron McCray, Raymond Santana, Korey Wise and Kevin Richardson. In 1989, at the ages of 14 to 16, they were falsely charged, convicted and condemned to sentences ranging from seven to 13 years for the brutal assault and rape of a 28-year-old bank executive out for a nighttime run in Central Park. With the 2002 confession of the actual rapist, Matias Reyes, which was confirmed by DNA, the Central Park Five were finally exonerated after serving their entire sentences.

The recent documentary, *The Central Park Five*, by Sarah Burns, her husband David McMahon and father Ken Burns, powerfully exposes how the cops and prosecutors—and bourgeois journalists who joined the racist pack howling for blood—had every reason to know that the five teenagers had nothing to do with the jogger's rape. The film demonstrates how the racist show trial devastated their lives and those of their families. Raymond Santana noted that he was "at that point of coming into who I was...but I never really got there." They were repeatedly denied parole for refusing to admit to the rape.

Sometime after 9 p.m. on 19 April 1989,

Jim Estrin

Defendants at pretrial hearing for 1989 rape of jogger in Central Park.

Trisha Meili went for her regular run around the reservoir in Central Park. A little earlier, a group of some 30 black and Latino teenagers from Harlem, the Five among them, had entered the north end of the park. In the course of less than an hour, some of the group attacked joggers and bicycle riders. An apparently homeless man was brutally beaten. Some of the youths were picked up and initially held for questioning regarding the assaults. At no time did they cross paths with Meili. When her horribly beaten body was discovered in another part of the park, the calculus of the NYPD cops was simple: black youths, white rape victim, crime solved.

The documentary shows how the cops and prosecutors knew very well there was no DNA or other evidence to link the Five to the rape. Since DNA testing turned up only one semen sample, the cops knew it was not a "gang rape," as they luridly described it. The documentary's footage of the crime scene showing the narrow path of worn grass where Reyes had dragged the jogger's body clearly ruled out more than one attacker. Although the victim lost 75 percent of her blood, there was none found on any of the youths. Cops also concealed from the defense that a similar rape had occurred two days earlier in the park, for which Reyes was later convicted.

The heart of the prosecution's case was coerced "confessions" extracted through threats, false promises of leniency and assurances that they could go home once ratting the others out. Even in the confessions, obtained through up tu 30 hours of interrogations, not one of them ever admitted to actually raping the jogger. Instead, they told of being part of a group attack in which others committed the rape. As graphically captured by the documentary, in the basic details as to the location, description of the woman, number of people involved and weapons used, the stories were so disparate from each other—and the known facts—as to demonstrate that they were nothing but the product of scared, tired and hungry kids trying to tell the cops what they wanted to hear so they could go home.

To cover for the NYPD's crimes, the Bloomberg administration has launched a vendetta against the filmmakers. Lawyers for the City have issued subpoenas demanding they turn over all unused footage of their interviews with the five men. The filmmakers have refused to cave in, citing New York State shield laws protecting journalists from compromising their sources. When the City ranted that the shield law was inapplicable as the documentary wasn't journalism but "advocacy," Ken Burns tartly replied: "We made a film about the facts of the case and that is these men were wrongly convicted, and had years of their lives stolen." He poignantly added, "One of the things that was stolen from these men was their humanity. In the media they were turned into wild beasts, a wolf pack, and we wanted to return their humanity."

A Toxic Cocktail

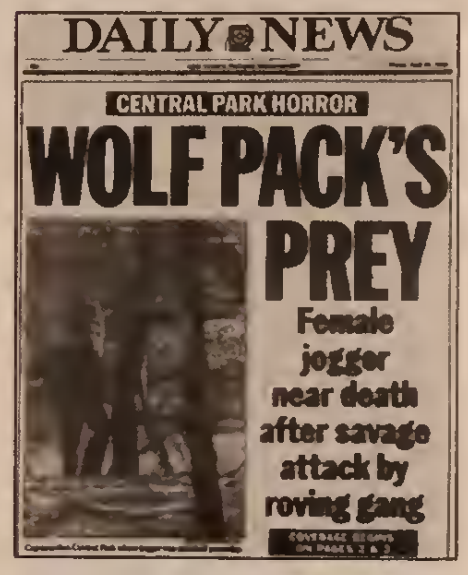
For years before 1989, New York had been synonymous with urban decay, graphically shown by the smoldering ashes of South Bronx tenements, graffiti-covered subway cars, litter-ridden streets, citywide electrical blackouts, crumbling bridges and, above all, record levels of crime. While the Park Avenue bourgeoisie glided above the fray, shuttling from Wall Street to Lincoln Center to cocktails at the Waldorf and back to fundraisers at the Met, working people and the ghetto poor were reeling. Hundreds of thousands of jobs in manufacturing, longshore, printing, garment, food and beverage production had been lost since the 1960s. Successive city administratiuns had taken the ax to just about every beneficial social program or municipal service—libraries, medical clinics, after-school programs, firehouses. Free tuition at the celebrated city university system was eliminated, ushering in a racist purge of the colleges.

The stock market boom of the 1980s hrought a vast expansion of jobs in financial and corporate services—bankers, accountants, lawyers, advertising and insurance—as well as low-wage jobs to service them. In contrast to an earlier generation of financial barons who lived in Connecticut and Long Island, the new wave of Wall Street bankers and yuppies were staying put. Emptied factories were converted into million-dollar lofts, and high-rise luxury buildings sprang up across Manhattan. Toney new restaurants, discos and exclusive health clubs became the playgrounds for the new rich. Stretch limos, in which Wall Street traders could sip champagne and snort cocaine, careened past poor hlack kids being busted for smoking a pipe of crack un streets filled with thousands upon thousands of homeless. Discontent seethed—and was kept in check by racist cop terror and the pitting of one sector of the working population against another.

Ed Koch, a voice of white petty-bourgeois rage against blacks and labor (see box), had run NYC for 12 years at the time Meili's unconscious body was discovered. The Koch years laid a trail of horrors, beginning with the many black people killed by the cops—among them 67-year-old Eleanor Bumpurs, 25-year-old artist Michael Stewart and 17-year-old black honor student Edmund Perry. In 1987 alone, the killer cops gunned down 24 people, all but three black or Hispanic. Lynch mobs took the lives of transit worker Willie Turks in Gravesend, Brooklyn, in 1982 and 23-year-old Michael Griffith in Howard Beach, Queens, in 1986.

These atrocities were repeatedly met by outrage and protest. Positioning themselves at the head of the anger were the demagogic nationalist preachers Herbert Daughtry and, most prominently, Al Sharpton, who in the mid 1980s wore a wire for the Feds investigating maverick black elected officials. Sharpton and Daughtry played a critical role in redirecting the rage against cop and other racist terror into intercommunal hostilities.

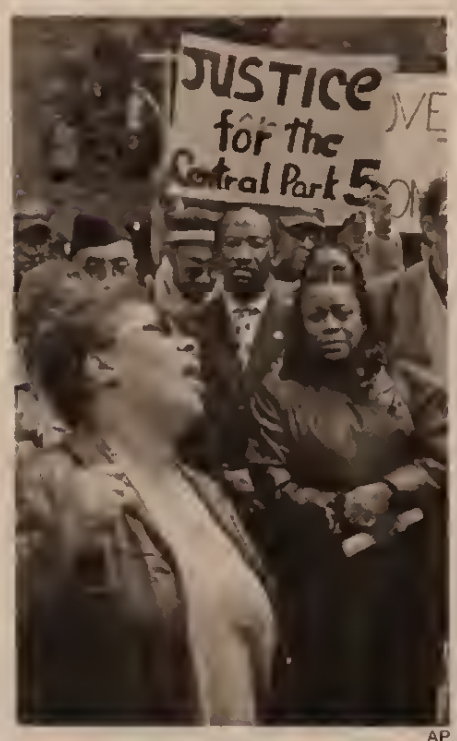
The case of the Central Park jogger was like lighter fluid added to the racist fear and hatred toward the besieged black population. From the moment the victim was taken to the hospital, *all* black and Latino youth, not just the Five, were being demonized in the press. The *New York Times* (21 April 1989) ran the headline, "Youths Rape and Beat Central Park Jogger," while the right-wing gutter rag *New York Post* screamed: "Wolfpack Rapes



21 April 1989: New York gutter press whips up racist hysteria demonizing Central Park Five.

Jogger." The press dutifully ran with the cops' claim that the detained youths boasted that their rampage through the park was a new form of ghetto amusement known as "wilding." Four months later, a gang of white punks in Bensonhurst blew away 16-year-old Yusef Hawkins, who was in "their" neighborhood to visit his white girlfriend. The neighbors excused this coldblooded murder by pointing to the Central Park rape.

It also quickly became a clarion call for racist legal lynching. A *New York Post* (26 April 1989) editorial demanded, "Channel Your Outrage: Demand the Death Penalty." Donald Trump paid $85,000 for full-page ads in the city's fuur major newspapers declaring: "Bring Back the Death Penalty, Bring Back Our Police." Trump demanded, "Let our politicians give hack our police department's power to keep us safe. Unshackle them from the constant chant of 'police brutality' which every petty criminal hurls immediately at an officer who has just risked his or her



AP

Dolores Wise (left), mother of framed-up youth Korey Wise, at rally outside Manhattan Supreme Court, October 2002.

Racist Koch Croaks

WV Photo

AP

Harlem, 1980: Mayor Koch praised "restraint" of cops after they busted heads of black residents protesting closing of Sydenham Hospital.

At long last, on February 1 Ed Koch finally breathed his last wheezy breath. The former New York City mayor was immediately beatified by the capitalist press. Admirers and former foes alike offered tributes, among them black Democratic operative Al Sharpton. President Obama gushed that he was "an extraordinary mayor." On the other side, hundreds of thousands of blacks, Latinos and workers who suffered through the Koch years would love nothing more than to mark his passing by dancing the hora on his grave.

As we wrote in "Racist Pig Ed Koch" (*WV* No. 351, 30 March 1984) during his second term as mayor:

> "Koch is a monster who loves to hurt the poor, the minorities. He is a virulent nationalist, a right-wing extremist who believes in genocide. He gets Harlem and the South Bronx confused with the West Bank. He treats blacks and Hispanics like Arabs, and turnstile jumpers like PLO 'terrorists.' The only difference between him and the gang of fascist killers in Israel led by JDL *Führer* Meir Kahane... is that Koch made it up the greasy pole of a bourgeois-democratic society.... Otherwise, he's as chemically pure a fascist as you get."

Koch wasn't just another big city mayor inflicting austerity and pain on the laboring and suffering population—he positively grooved on it. A liberal Democratic Party Congressman, Koch was elected mayor in 1977 by appealing to the white "ethnic" vote. He lurked outside subway stops to greet prospective voters, "Hi, I'm Ed Koch, I'm for capital punishment." A raving Zionist, Koch believed Jews deserved special privileges. He ostentatiously celebrated Purim in 1984 by marching through the streets of Queens alongside Ariel Sharon, the butcher of more than 1,000 Palestinian refugees at Sabra and Shatila. Upon his re-election in 1985, Koch declared that "while it was the people who elected me, it was God that selected me" (*New Yorker*, 23 March 1987).

For Koch, the high point of his tenure was the eleven-day transit strike in 1980, during which he was conspicuous in whipping up white middle-class animosity against the heavily black transit workers union, greeting yuppies traipsing across the Brooklyn Bridge in Brooks Brothers suits and Adidas running shoes at 8 a.m.

Koch and his cops carried out a war against the homeless, hot dog vendors, newsstand operators and those protesting gentrification. Presiding over black misery, in 1980 Koch's cops carried out a brutal attack on Harlem residents protesting the closing of Sydenham Hospital, a lifeline for thousands of Harlem's poor. Mocking the black activists, Koch donned an Afro wig and did a minstrel jig at that year's "Inner Circle" ball. His handpicked medical examiner, Elliot Gross, routinely destroyed evidence and falsified autopsy reports to exonerate the killer cops who were gunning down black people.

Koch's admirers and liberal hagiographers both like to cite his trademark greeting, "How'm I doing?" Now, as far as we're concerned, never better.

life to save another's." Our article "Stop Legal Lynching!" (*WV* No. 477, 12 May 1989) denounced the racist lynch-mob atmosphere surrounding the case; however, it also wrongly took as good coin the news accounts that the "attackers were the hard core of a larger bunch of marauders" who had been in the park that night.

In 1994, George Pataki's support of the death penalty played a large role in his election victory over the incumbent, Democratic governor Mario Cuomo, who had repeatedly vetoed death penalty legislation. The next year, the New York legislature voted to bring back capital punishment, which was later ruled unconstitutional by the Court of Appeals in 2004.

Amid a tightly contested mayoral primary race with black Democrat David Dinkins, Koch seized on the jogger case to once again play to the racist vote. Deemed better able to keep a lid on the NYC tinderbox, Dinkins was elected mayor in 1989 after reassuring Wall Street that the unions and minorities "will take it from me." He did his best to live up to that promise, but was nonetheless dropped by the city rulers as too beholden to the black population. Dinkins lost the 1993 election to Rudolph Giuliani, whose campaign whipped up a racist riot of 10,000 cops who stormed City Hall denouncing the mayor as a "washroom attendant" and "crack addict." Dinkins' enduring legacy for the city was his appointment of Ray Kelly as police commissioner.

Wilford Harewood

February 1987: Protest outside Bronx courthouse against 1984 police killing of black grandmother Eleanor Bumpurs.

"Putting the Criminal Justice System on Trial"

The documentary opens with a statement from Koch made shortly after the Five's arrest: "I think that everybody here—maybe across the nation—will look at this case to see how the criminal justice system works.... This is, I think, putting the criminal justice system on trial." From their liberal perspective, the filmmakers consider Koch's statement to be ironic—the wrong men were convicted, so the system failed its "trial." A similar take comes from the Workers World Party, which describes the frame-ups of the Central Park Five and the Scottsboro Boys—nine black youths falsely accused of raping two white women in the 1930s—as "powerful reminders of what can happen when the justice system is manipulated, the truth is ignored, and racism dominates" (www.workers.org, 14 December 2012).

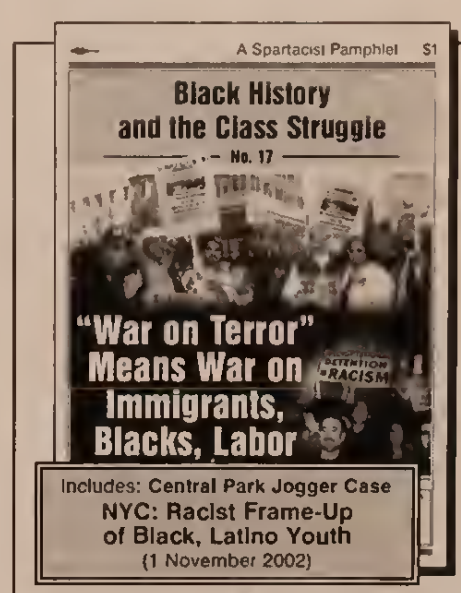
In fact, racist frame-ups are not "what can happen" but *endemic* to the very workings of American capitalist justice. The cops, prosecutors and courts are core components of the capitalist state, whose function is to repress workers and oppressed minorities in defending the class rule, profits and property of the capitalist class. The oppression of black people is integral to American capitalism, serving to divide the working class and drive down wages for all. The institutions of the state cannot be anything but racist to the core.

Indeed, for the capitalist rulers, the justice system passed Koch's trial with flying colors: it did exactly what it is meant to do. The Central Park case ended in conviction and played a major role in feeding a climate in which ghetto youth are demonized as inveterate criminals, who can only be safely housed in prisons. This war on black people was replicated in cities across the country, as ghetto residents, once a reservoir of unskilled labor for auto and steel plants that had since been shuttered, became a "surplus" population in the eyes of America's capitalist rulers.

The "war on drugs," launched by the Reagan administration in the early 1980s, took aim at black people with a brutal vengeance. Reagan's foot soldiers were Jesse Jackson and other black Democrats. In New York City, Sharpton joined the cops on the street in whipping up a pogrom against Arab shopkeepers supposedly selling "drug paraphernalia." The anti-drug crusade brought draconian mandatory minimum and "three strikes" sentencing laws, expanded use of the death penalty and a deep erosion of the rights of those accused of crimes. Over the last four decades, the prison population has more than quadrupled to over two million, the majority black and Latino.

Today, billionaire mayor Bloomberg acts as if the city is just a playground for himself and his Wall Street cronies. The working people who create the wealth in this society are looked down upon as mere vassals. Although less overtly racist than Koch and Giuliani, Bloomberg has heaped on the cruelties of life for the black and Latino masses to an extent that his predecessors could envy. The NYPD's "stop and frisk" offensive has led to tens of thousands being saddled with records, many for simply possessing small amounts of marijuana. More than half of black city residents old enough to work had no job at all last year, and the number of homeless children, disproportionately black, is at a level not witnessed in NYC since the Great Depression.

Society's masters expect that the case of the Central Park Five will end up being little more than a footnote, something for them to shrug off as the cost of getting caught doing their business. At the time the Five were exonerated, we wrote in "NYC: Racist Frame-Up of Black, Latino Youth," (*WV* No. 790, 1 November 2002): "No amount of money can mend what has been done to their young lives, or to their families. But we welcome any money the five can wrench out of the racist city fathers—selling off Trump Plaza and giving them the proceeds would be a start." Even if it were to come to pass, such a minimal measure for the Five would do absolutely nothing to alter the daily dehumanization of black people in New York and other cities across the country. True justice for McCray, Santana, Wise, Richardson, Salaam as well as the millions of black youth who walk in their shoes will come only when the multiracial proletariat rises up to smash this capitalist system and establish a workers government. ■



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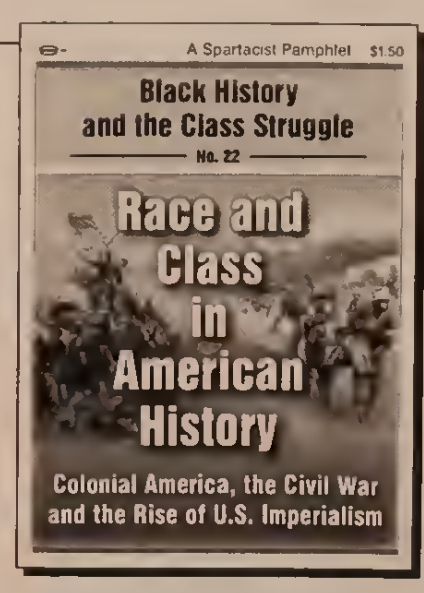

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Honor Lenin, Luxemburg and Liebknecht!

Spartakist

Spartakist contingent honoring "Three L's" at January 13 demonstration in Berlin. Banner reads: "For the Reforging of the Fourth International!"

German Trotskyists Say: No to Stalinophobic Bloc at "3 L's" Demo!

Thousands march to the Memorial to the Socialists in eastern Berlin every January to honor Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, founders of the Communist Party of Germany (KPD). The two great revolutionists were assassinated in 1919 by Freikorps officers at the behest of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) government of Friedrich Ebert. Philipp Scheidemann and Gustav Noske amid the suppression of the Spartakist uprising. After the death of Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin in January 1924, this annual demonstration commemorated the "Three L's." Now organized by the Communist Platform of the Left Party along with the former West German Stalinists, it survives the 1990 capitalist counterrevolution in East Germany (DDR) to the consternation of the German ruling class and anti-communists everywhere.

Each year our comrades of the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany (SpAD) organize a contingent in the demo honoring Lenin, Luxemburg and Liebknecht. Reprinted below is an excerpt from a supplement to the SpAD's newspaper *Spartakist* that was distributed at this year's 10,000-strong march. It is a reply in the negative to an Open Letter by the Revolutionary Internationalist Organization (RIO) calling on the SpAD, as well as a coterie of pseudo-Trotskyist organizations, to build a joint contingent in the "Three L's" demonstration. RIO is a split from the German Workers Power youth group Revolution and is now affiliated with the Argentine-based Trotskyist Faction-Fourth International (FT-CI), peddlers of nationalist "anti-imperialist united-front" politics.

RIO sought to build its bloc after elements of youth organizations connected to the SPD and the Left Party called for an alternative "Rosa & Karl" demonstration in the former West Berlin. The organizers of that event, which drew about 500 people, didn't want to be associated with flags of the DDR and Soviet Union, portraits of Stalin, Mao and Lenin or symbols of the Kurdish and Palestinian national liberation movements.

Its instigators were the deceptively named "Anti-Germans": pro-Zionist, pro-imperialist provocateurs who purvey the Big Lie of "collective guilt." This convenient alibi for the German bourgeoisie that brought the Nazis to power maintains that all Germans, including workers, are responsible for the Holocaust and other Nazi crimes. "Anti-German" thugs have repeatedly physically attacked leftist meetings and individuals defending the rights of the Palestinians. They are virulently hostile to the workers movement and out to destroy it.

Significantly, the call for the "Rosa & Karl" demonstration did meet opposition within the social-democratic youth organizations. Several groups defied the decision of their leaderships and instead took part in the "Three L's" demonstration. None of the recipients of the open letter opted to bloc with RIO. But marching behind them was a disparate collection of social democrats and organizations with Trotskyist pretensions, including the Workers Power group from which RIO split. Also in tow were some Pabloites intent on building yet another lash-up modeled on the French New Anti-Capitalist Party, who tailed after the anti-communist campaign of the "Anti-Germans" by carrying the banner "Neither Stalin nor Noske."

The SpAD supplement included the January 1990 call by the Trotskyist League of Germany (TLD) and the Spartakist Groups for the "Three L's" demonstration in the DDR (reprinted in *WV* No. 994, 20 January 2012). The TLD and the Spartakist Groups fused soon thereafter to form the SpAD. The 1990 call vehemently condemned the SPD as the Trojan horse of counterrevolution. The SPD used its traditional influence in the working class to push capitalist reunification of East and West Germany. For their part, the Stalinist predecessors of today's Left Party, who retained great influence among workers of the DDR, fostered illusions in the SPD and sought them out as partners, betraying widespread sentiment among the working class to struggle for a real socialist society. The International Communist League fought tooth and nail against capitalist *Anschluss* and for revolutionary reunification—proletarian political revolution in the East and workers revolution in the West.

The reply of the SpAD to RIO was snapped up by demonstrators. A youth from Dresden with a Stalinist background was surprised to learn that Trotskyists defended the Soviet Union and still defend China and the other bureaucratically deformed workers states. Others were happy that the SpAD had denounced "Anti-German" maneuvers to wreck the "Three L's" demonstration. The SpAD explained that Trotskyism is not a left version of anti-revolutionary social democracy but represents the revolutionary continuity of Lenin and the Bolsheviks.

* * *

To the Revolutionary Internationalist Organization:

We received your invitation to join a "commemoration contingent" for the Bolshevik-Leninists [the Trotskyist Left Opposition in the Soviet Union]. We will not participate in your contingent. The call by social-democratic youth organizations for the "Rosa & Karl" demo, which is heavily influenced by the "Anti-Germans," is an anti-communist provocation poorly disguised as anti-Stalinism. Your call also capitulates to social-democratic anti-communism. The SpAD and Spartakist Youth will take part in the "Three L's" demo with our own contingent, under our banner "For the Reforging of the Fourth International!"

As revolutionary Trotskyists, we don't agree with the positions expressed in your Open Letter and various articles. You say not one word about the more-than-dubious character of this "Rosa & Karl" demo, which clearly reflects the politics of the "Anti-Germans," who have implanted themselves in the social-democratic youth organizations. Already at the "Three L's" demo in January 2012, a small group of "Anti-Germans" staged a provocation with their banner "No, No—That's Not Communism!" that was aimed at the contingents of Turkish/Kurdish leftists. Later, they posted photos of these leftists on the Internet, clearly playing into the hands of the repressive state apparatus. It is no accident that the "Rosa & Karl" bloc has made the slogan on this banner their main rallying cry, and the Berlin Jusos [SPD youth group] refer positively to this "action."

The pro-Zionist and pro-imperialist "Anti-Germans" are racists who hate Muslims. They are inspired by the state's reactionary "war on terror" and have distinguished themselves with past provocations in which they beat up leftists and liberals. They are tolerated by the reformist leaderships of the SPD and Left Party and used as a battering ram against the left. The "Anti-Germans" applaud the imperialists' work: they enthuse over the imperialist occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan, are in the front line of the warmongering against Iran, etc. These cheerleaders for George W. Bush, the butcher of the Balkans [German chancellor Gerhard] Schröder (SPD) and Benjamin Netanyahu's Zionist state of Israel have no place in the workers movement and on the left.

You concur with the "Anti-German" censorship efforts when you comment in your 17 December *Indymedia* article "Social Democratic LL Demo" [referring to the traditional march] that pictures of Stalin and Mao at the demo are "against the wishes of the organizers." By contrast, our solidarity is with the Turkish/Kurdish workers and leftists, who are persecuted by the bourgeois state here and in Turkey. Unlike the "Anti-Germans," they are a crucial part of the workers movement in this country and often stand in a more militant tradition of class struggle, which is another reason that the "Anti-Germans" target them. We Spartakists oppose censorship in the workers movement! We argue against the reformist Stalinist politics of Turkish and other organizations—such as the notion of building "socialism in one

Spartakist

Demonstrators at "Three L's" commemoration carry portraits of three female members of Kurdistan Workers Party murdered last month in Paris.

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country" and the treacherous popular-front policy. It is through sharp *programmatic* debate that revolutionary Trotskyism can win out in political struggle.

We also reject your characterization of the Bolshevik-Leninists as a "revolutionary current" "that opposed capitalism and Stalinism, and hence was persecuted by capitalist and Stalinist regimes." By disappearing Trotsky's programmatic demand for the unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union, which in spite of its bureaucratic degeneration under Stalin remained a workers state, you implicitly equate the bureaucratically degenerated Soviet workers state—as well as the deformed workers states—with capitalism, spreading reformist confusion. In the "Social Democratic LL Demo" article, you equate capitalist regimes with workers states when writing:

> "Their reason for the parallel event with the name 'Rosa and Karl' is that the pictures of Stalin and Mao, which are shown every year at the LL demo...supposedly stand 'for the failure of state socialist projects in the last century.' What this totally ignores is that the political balance of the Social Democracy in the last century was no less problematic."

Do we really need to remind you that the SPD leadership around Ebert/Scheidemann/Noske gave the order to assassinate Liebknecht and Luxemburg? They knew exactly what they were doing. As Noske said, "Someone has to be the bloodhound." The politics of the SPD leadership were not simply "problematic" but were a key element in heading off revolution in 1918-19 and again in 1923 in the service of the bourgeoisie [see "A Trotskyist Critique of Germany 1923 and the Comintern," *Spartacist* (English-language edition) No. 56, Spring 2001]. Social Democratic politics bear a central responsibility for the fact that German imperialism was able to resurrect itself, almost entirely annihilating the Jews of Europe and helping drown the world in blood for a second time in the interimperialist Second World War.

Spartakist

January 1990: Spartakist contingent at 250,000-strong "Three L's" demonstration in East Berlin.

Your reformist appetites bring you to a point where you can't even distinguish between the class character of capitalist rule under a social-democratic government and that of the Soviet degenerated workers state. So what defines your "commemoration contingent?" We think it is its closeness to anti-communist Social Democracy, which ever since the October Revolution has hated the Soviet Union more than its own bloody bourgeoisie. You sell the *form* of your contingent as a united front, with freedom of propaganda and criticism. But the *content* of your "commemoration contingent" is totally counterposed to the purpose of the united front, which is to unite the working class in action against the class enemy: class against class. You bow to the anti-communism of Noske's successors and cannot discern where the fundamental class line is. You have this in common with the other pseudo-Trotskyist organizations that you invited to join your "commemoration contingent."

When the question was one of proletarian political revolution or capitalist counterrevolution, all these organizations chose the side of counterrevolution—starting with the rise of Solidarność in Poland, followed by the DDR in 1989-90 and the Soviet Union in 1991-92. Thus, in the winter of 1990 the SAV [Socialist Alternative, part of Peter Taaffe's Committee for a Workers' International] in the DDR demanded, "SPD, go on the offensive" and in 1991 the international of the GAM/Workers Power, your former mother organization, was literally on Yeltsin's barricades with the counterrevolutionary rabble. The dubious BSA (today PSG [Party for Social Equality]) could be found in the front lines of the anti-Stasi witchhunters alongside the SPD and the petty-bourgeois Citizens' Movement, which fused with the Greens. The deeply divided "United Secretariat," whose members at the time were in the VSP, liquidated into the United Left, which for its part joined a short-lived electoral alliance with the pastors of the SDP (SPD offshoot in the DDR) and, later, a section of the [Christian Democrat] CDU. Only the SpAD and our comrades of the International Communist League fought to defend the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states against the counterrevolutionary machinations of Solidarność, the SPD in the DDR and Yeltsin, and to sweep away the Stalinist bureaucracy through a proletarian political revolution.

Our tradition is that of the then-revolutionary Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party in the U.S., which sent the following telegram to Stalin in 1941, shortly after the attack on the Soviet Union by fascist Germany:

> "Trotskyists all over the world, now as always, are solidly for the defense of the Soviet Union. In this hour of grave danger to the achievements of the October revolution, we demand that you release all Trotskyist and other pro-Soviet political prisoners who are now in jails and in concentration camps, to enable them to take their proper place in the front ranks of the defenders of the Soviet Union."

Likewise, today we Trotskyists of the ICL stand for the military defense of the remaining deformed workers states—Cuba, China, Vietnam, North Korea and Laos, and for proletarian political revolution to bring down the Stalinist bureaucracies, which endanger the defense of these countries with their pursuit of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism.

In the DDR, the SPD was the Trojan horse of capitalist counterrevolution. It is necessary to break politically with social-democratic reformism, whether it take the form of the SPD or of the Left Party. The pseudo-Trotskyists, including your organization, are a political obstacle to this aim. Reforge the Fourth International! ■

India...

(continued from page 2)

Britain and caused the collapse of entire branches of the Indian economy, including its irrigated agriculture. The peasantry was burdened with taxes owed to both the local landlords and the colonial state. To collect the taxes, the landlords and their middlemen wielded extortion, violence and cruelty against the poor throughout the countryside.

When the conquest of India was completed, the British rulers raised a native army, recruited predominantly from the higher castes. This situation lasted until the 1857 Sepoy uprising, which sparked what Marx called "the first Indian war of independence." Subsequently, the composition of the army was changed. But divide-and-rule remained the governing principle, which Marx described at the time of the revolt as "the great rule by which Great Britain, for about one hundred and fifty years, contrived to retain the tenure of her Indian Empire."

Since independence in 1947, capitalist India has been dependent on imperialist finance capital, and will remain so, notwithstanding the myths about it becoming a superpower. Meanwhile, the native capitalist rulers have used the caste system to maintain Hindu domination. Beginning in the days of Mohandas ("Mahatma") Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, the era that bourgeois liberals today hark back to as the golden opportunity to establish "secular democracy," the Congress Party has manipulated caste divisions and communalism in the service of Hindu chauvinism. Congress represented the interests of the urban traders, professionals and above all the rich farmers. The Indian nationalism espoused by Congress always contained a strong element of Hindu and Hindi-language chauvinism.

Gandhi, an idol of liberals, was steeped in caste prejudice and anti-woman bigotry. In the context of the horrific bloodshed that accompanied the partition of India, Gandhi advised young women facing rape to bite their tongue and hold their breath until they died. In our article "Stalinist Alliance with Churchill Betrayed Indian Revolution" (*WV* No. 970, 3 December 2010), we explained: "Gandhi's job was to extract as much as possible from the British, in the common interests of saving capitalism, while keeping the burgeoning and now increasingly militant struggles of the workers and peasants at bay. The textile magnate Ambalal Sarabhai put it succinctly when he said Gandhi 'was the best guarantee against communism which India possessed'."

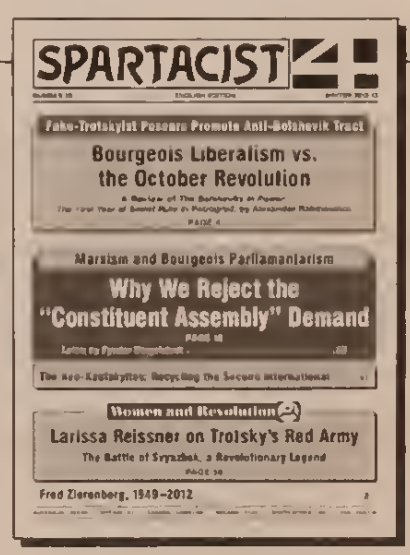
Felice Beato

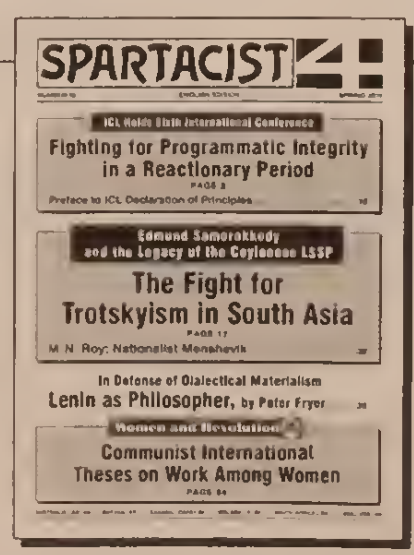
Two Indian soldiers (sepoys) hanged for participation in 1857 rebellion against British colonial rule.

Out of fear that the "untouchables" might unite with Muslims and act as a parliamentary counterweight, Congress co-opted *dalit* leader B.R. Ambedkar to head up the drafting of the constitution, which banned "untouchability" but left the caste system intact. Seats in parliament were reserved for "untouchables" and "tribals" (*dalits* and *adivasis* today). Later, as a minimal reform, a percentage of jobs in public employment were reserved for *dalits* and lower-caste members. Coming to regret his involvement in drafting the constitution, Ambedkar summed up independent India: "The same old tyranny, the same old oppression, the same old discrimination which existed before, exists now, and perhaps in a worse form."

The vile Hindu chauvinism peddled by Congress sparked intense pogroms against Sikhs in 1984. It also paved the way for the BJP to ride to governmental power on the back of murderous anti-Muslim pogroms that culminated in the destruction of the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya in 1992. The Hindu-chauvinist riots in Ayodhya were sparked in part by proposals from the government's Mandal Commission to reserve jobs for certain lower castes.

Contrary to liberal illusions, a "democratic" secular society was not on the historical agenda for independent India under capitalist rule. Only proletarian socialist revolution—spread throughout the rest of South Asia and extended to the imperialist centers—can address the enormous task of eliminating scarcity. This alone can lay the *material* basis for eradicating the oppression of women and caste and for liberating all of the impoverished masses. A vast development of the productive forces will bring millions of women and men out of rural backwardness and into an industrialized society. We seek to build a Leninist-Trotskyist party in India, part of a reforged Fourth International, committed to a socialist federation of South Asia. ■





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Greece...

(continued from page 12)

minority in Greece and for a socialist federation of the Balkans as the only way to resolve the myriad national questions in the region.

It is telling that as the forces of the capitalist state were rounding up anarchist activists and smashing the metro strike, Syriza (Coalition of the Radical Left) leader Alexis Tsipras was on an international tour to meet with representatives of the imperialist rulers in Germany and the U.S. Tsipras, who rose to prominence after Syriza came in second in the last elections, was clearly seeking to reassure the imperialists that Syriza represents absolutely no threat to their interests in Greece. In a speech to the Brookings Institution, a U.S. bourgeois think tank, Tsipras said: "Those who engage in scare-mongering will tell you that our party will come to power, rip up our agreements with the European Union and the IMF, take our country out of the euro zone. My party, Syriza, doesn't want any of these things" (*Dow Janes Business News*, 25 January).

In contrast to the fake Trotskyist organizations inside Syriza and in the Antarsya coalition who all salivated at the prospect of a "left government" around the last elections, the TGG has always told the truth about Syriza—that it accepts the capitalist order and the EU, seeking only to (barely) ameliorate the terms of extortion. There is no way forward for the workers and poor of Greece and indeed, the workers of all of Europe, without a sharp struggle against the imperialist EU, the central mechanism by which the combined capitalist powers have imposed austerity on their own working classes, slashed wages and rolled back trade-union rights and work conditions.

While the KKE tops have made a point of opposing the EU and of rejecting the call to join a capitalist government of the left with Syriza, their consistent refusal to defend anarchists against capitalist state repression is a clear example of their fundamental loyalty to bourgeois democracy. Far from standing up to the recent propaganda campaign by the government and bourgeois press branding everyone on the left, and even Syriza, as defenders of "terrorism," the KKE has echoed the bourgeois denunciations of violence. It has also condemned anarchists for occupying offices of the Democratic Left—one of the ruling parties.

The 100 anarchist activists arrested in raids in December and January were themselves violently evicted and arrested by the cops for the "crime" of occupying abandoned buildings in downtown Athens. The KKE's refusal to defend anarchists paves the way for attacks against its own supporters. The KKE's trade-union activists from the PAME formation were victims of a vicious police attack on January 30 when riot cops used tear gas and batons to break up a protest at the office of the Minister of Labor by PAME members, resulting in 35 arrests. The TGG demands: *Drop all charges against the anarchist activists and the PAME pratesters!*

AP

Golden Dawn fascists in Thessaloniki celebrate winning 18 seats in national elections, June 2012.

The government may have succeeded in forcing the metro workers back to work, but as the seamen's and other recent strikes by transport workers, shipyard workers, doctors and nurses have shown, the government has not succeeded in extinguishing class struggle. This wave of strikes and protests demonstrates the deep anger and militancy of the Greek working class, which has the power to fight in the interests of all those thrown on the scrap heap by the capitalist crisis. The government response to the metro and seamen's strikes underscores just how fearful the bourgeoisie is of such strikes spreading.

In a January 29 statement, the New Left Current (NAR), which emerged from a 1989 split in the KKE and is the biggest force inside Antarsya, correctly noted that the reformist labor bureaucracy of the GSEE and ADEDY union federations failed to organize united struggle by all the unions to defend the striking metro workers. NAR calls for coordinated action by the whole of the working people in a front "for anti-capitalist overthrow" of the policies of the government. Yet its statement says nothing about who or what is to replace the existing government. And when it says that Syriza will be judged on its response to the current struggles, it is obviously leaving the door open for a left capitalist government led by Syriza.

Uniting the power of the trade unions in coordinated action against the capitalist assault—instead of dissipating that power by having rolling strikes at different times in different sectors—is certainly called for. But bringing to bear the full power of the working class would represent a challenge to the whole capitalist order in Greece, and hence is unacceptable to the pro-capitalist GSEE and ADEDY union tops. The working class urgently needs a revolutionary leadership that links the daily struggles against capitalist austerity to the need to overthrow the capitalist order.

Such a leadership would mobilize around transitional demands such as a shorter workweek with no loss of pay and a massive program of public works to provide jobs, the indexing of wages to inflation, and that the capitalists open their (real) books to expose their exploitation and robbery of the workers. Such demands point to the need for the proletariat to organize more broadly to fight for the expropriation of the capitalist means of production and the establishment of a planned economy under workers rule, where production would be based on social need, not profit. In other words, the working class must fight for the overthrow of the capitalist state, not to take control of the existing state in the form of a left capitalist government. Such revolutionary struggle would necessarily need to extend from tiny, dependent Greece to other countries of the region and in particular to the imperialist centers where workers are also being starved. This is the perspective that our comrades of the TGG fight for.

The following article, translated from German and adapted for *Workers Vanguard*, is taken from *Spartakist* No. 196 (January 2013), newspaper of the Spartakist-Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands, German section of the International Communist League. It is based on a forum by our comrade Sylvia that was held in September 2012.

* * *

I visited Greece a few times between Novemher 2011 and July 2012. Although the austerity programs had been in force for quite a while, the effects were not all that evident that November. In contrast, many changes had occurred by May and even more by July-August. I'm not talking about the buildings in central Athens that burned to the ground in the course of protest demos and weren't rebuilt but rather about seeing real despair on people's faces, with their increasing poverty evident in their clothing.

I lived in Greece for a couple of years. Homelessness, previously rare, has grown tremendously since then. Youth unemployment now stands at around 50 percent and, while this has been a fact of life in Spain for years, it hadn't been that way in Greek society. Whenever I'm in Athens, I always revisit the districts where I've lived to take a look at the shops and the people. In November 2011, about a quarter of the stores had shut their doors—a bakery or a pet store—but in July-August it was at least a third, on many blocks even half the stores.

The drastic change became more evident when talking with friends or people on the street. This was apparent with health care. There were big protests at every public building, particularly hospitals, and just this week a group of furious pensioners stormed the Ministry of Health because they have to pay for their medicine now. The state isn't paying and many who were just barely getting by have slid into total poverty. On top of all the job cuts there have been massive pay cuts for those still working—in many fields as much as 25 percent. Pensions have also been slashed.

All this is taking place at the behest of the Troika, a group consisting of the EU, IMF and the European Central Bank (ECB). The Troika's aim is to make sure the Greek working class pays the German and French banks and insurance companies. When then-prime minister George Papandreou suggested holding a referendum on the Troika's austerity dictates in November 2011, he was gone in a matter of days, replaced by a technocrat named Lucas Papademos who, interestingly enough, had once been vice president of the ECB.

Since then there have been two elections. It's obvious that traditional voting patterns have changed. Whereas in the past either PASOK or the conservative New Democracy ruled, since the June elections a coalition of the ND, PASOK and the Democratic Left has been ruling the country. But Syriza—to which former Eurocommunists, Maoists and a number of fake Trotskyist groups belong—emerged as the second most powerful force in both elections. Previously Syriza had been, in terms of votes, a relatively insignificant group, but in May it obtained 16 percent and in June over 26 percent.

Politically, the situation in Greece is extremely polarized. While participation in the elections has steadily fallen over the years—in 2004 it was 76 percent, now it is 62 percent—political discussions take place everywhere in the streets, whether you're going out for a coffee or buying cigarettes. People are very politicized, very furious and most of those who voted for Syriza in 2012 did so because they regarded it as a lesser evil.

For Workers United-Front Action to Stop the Fascists!

The deepening crisis is fueling the flames of nationalism, chauvinism and racism. People are looking for scapegoats, and hunting down immigrants has reached incredible proportions since the June elections. The fascists of Chrysi Avgi (Golden Dawn) got around 7 percent of the vote in both elections. They have a lot of support in the army and the police. The Greek paper *To Vima* (11 May 2012) found out that approximately half the police force voted for Golden Dawn in the May elections. Golden Dawn is of the same ilk as the notorious Nazi-loving Security Battalions and the "X" group of General Georgios Grivas—counter-revolutionary terror bands that murdered Communists in the Second World War and the ensuing Greek Civil War.

The fascists are the shock troops of national chauvinist reaction. They are kept in reserve by the bourgeoisie because they serve as a useful weapon against the workers in times of crisis. Today in Greece, we can see very clearly that fascism is a product of collapsing capitalism, fed by joblessness and the pauperization of the petty bourgeoisie. So, for us Marxists it's obvious that fascism can be eradicated only when the system of wage slavery is eliminated. And the decisive force for this is the working class because, with its hands on the levers of production, it generates profit for the bourgeoisie. Elevating the working class to consciousness of its historic task—overthrowing capitalism—requires a revolutionary party.

It was with horror that I learned from our comrades of the Trotskyist Group of Greece about the explosion of terror against immigrants, "illegals," non-Greeks. Fascist terror against immigrants goes hand in hand with state repression. The state has set up camps and is carrying out mass arrests in an operation cynically titled "Xenios Zeus" (Zeus as protector of guests and hospitality). In early August, 2,000 immigrants were arrested in Athens and similar actions were carried out in major cities like Patras and Thessaloniki. By the end of August, over 12,000 immigrants had been arrested or imprisoned. The Greek police's "Special Units for the Restoration of Public Order" went into the cities and arrested people, working hand in glove with the largely fascist citizen militias that exist in some towns.

In August, there was a TV report about a guy who shot two Albanian people. Normally, someone suspected of manslaughter or murder is put into investigative detention. Not here. At the same time, there are commercials on TV showing supposedly happy "illegals" with shopping bags in detention camps, who are then deported. In July, a Golden Dawn fascist physically assaulted a representative of Syriza and

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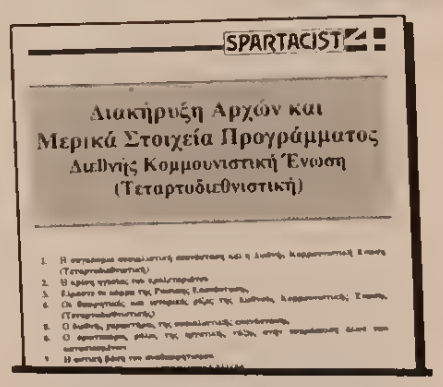

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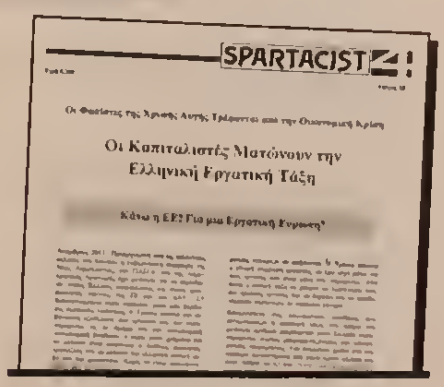

Golden Dawn Fascists Feed on Economic Crisis
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a KKE member of parliament on a TV panel discussion. This, of course, provoked widespread furor. Syriza protested immediately and organized some demos. We went to one that was organized by the SEK, the Greek fraternal organization of Marx 21 in Germany, i.e., the Cliffites. The demo was relatively small, attended almost solely by their own members. They demanded a state investigation into the ties between the fascists and the police. That is, they promote the illusion that the capitalist state can do away with the fascists.

But what is urgently necessary are defense actions to smash the fascists. These must be carried out with the broadest participation of the working class, joining together with the victims of the assaults. In areas with a high percentage of immigrants, workers defense groups must put an end to the attacks. Itself a prime target of fascist terror, the KKE possesses, through its trade-union formation PAME, the roots and authority in the working class to stop the Nazis by linking up with all those organized in the unions in united-front actions. But its reformist program of class collaboration prevents the KKE from doing this. The KKE's reaction to the fascist assault on its own MP was to call upon those who had voted for the Nazis to instead vote for the KKE. This is incredible, but it truly encapsulates the KKE's nationalism, populism and electoral cretinism. What is required is a revolutionary Leninist-Trotskyist party based on the working class. This party must be a tribune of all the oppressed as opposed to wooing votes on the basis of nationalism.

For a Socialist Federation of the Balkans!

The Greek working class is relatively small but militant. This underlines the need for it to seek allies outside the country, for instance, its class brothers elsewhere in the Balkans as well as in Turkey and Germany. But when you preach nationalism

AP

Alex Tsipras (left), head of Syriza, meets with European Parliament president Martin Schulz, Brussels, September 2012.

it with you. It is very difficult to find someone who considers socialism and opposition to national oppression more important than the boundaries of a capitalist Greece, which were drawn up through a series of wars and expulsions. This shows that nationalism is one of the core questions.

Down With the Imperialist EU!

Unfortunately, solidarity actions with the Greek populace are few and far between in Germany. This can be attributed partly to the fact that the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the Left Party, as well as the trade unions they lead, support the EU—a truly classic example of class collaboration. Thus, former chancellor Helmut Schmidt of the SPD warned of a return to nationalism should the EU come apart, while Sarah Wagenknecht of the Left Party stated that the euro had to be defended. In this manner, any possible protests of the German working class are to be channeled into support for the bourgeoisie. We of the ICL oppose the EU on principle, fighting for its destruction through international class struggle. Our starting point is what is in the interests of the working class on this question. We are for the United Socialist

EPA

Athens, October 2012: Anti-austerity protesters on eve of visit by German chancellor hold banner reading "Merkel Out!"

like the KKE, then you're undermining this international solidarity. This is one of the reasons we regard nationalism as the main ideological obstacle to the struggle for socialism in Greece. One example: the region in the north of the country around Thessaloniki is called Macedonia in Greek. Following the destruction of the Yugoslav deformed workers state at the beginning of the 1990s, the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia sought to include "Macedonia" in its name, triggering a gigantic wave of chauvinism in Greece. The KKE wrote at the time: "We don't let any foreign nationalist lay claim to even a centimeter of Greek soil" (KKE pamphlet "Positions on the Balkans," February 1992).

We of the ICL are unambiguously for Macedonia's right to self-determination, including the right of Macedonians in Greece to secede and join Macedonia. The Greek bourgeoisie fears that this part of "their" country called Macedonia could be taken away from them if Macedonians were granted the right to self-determination. In discussions you see just how touchy the Macedonia question is, no matter what the political coloration of your discussion partners might be. Either they become enraged, or they won't talk about States of Europe. The EU is an instrument of the European capitalists for the exploitation of the working classes of Europe, led mainly by the axis of the German and French imperialist powers.

The euro is a monetary instrument of the EU. Through it, Greece has no control over its currency. It cannot devalue its currency to improve its competitiveness and keep debt under control. Perhaps Greece would be better off without the euro, although a Greek currency wouldn't protect the working class from capitalist devastation either.

The EU arose in the fifties as an economic alliance of the imperialists against the Soviet Union. The Soviet state, created in the October Revolution of 1917 through the expropriation of the capitalist class and the collectivization of the means of production, remained a workers state despite its subsequent bureaucratic degeneration under Stalin. We Trotskyists offered unconditional military defense against the imperialists and against internal counterrevolution while fighting for proletarian political revolution to overthrow the Stalinists. Our defense of the Soviet Union is one reason why we were against the European Union from the outset.

The present crisis illuminates the age of imperialism. You can see how countries are ever more tightly integrated into the world market, finance capital is exported and industry is concentrated in monopolies. At the same time, capitalism rests upon nation states that come into conflict with one another in the worldwide pursuit of profits and new spheres of exploitation. Thus, the nation state constitutes a fetter on the further development of the productive forces. For the working class and the oppressed there is only one way out—socialist revolution that expropriates the bourgeoisie and establishes an international planned economy under workers rule. Every battle against the austerity measures, whether in Greece or in Spain, is a Europe-wide and an international struggle. Resistance to the EU is only the starting point. Since the cause of the crisis lies in the system of world capitalism, the solution is its overthrow.

The German bourgeoisie is unyielding in its demand that its austerity diktats be realized. If this causes its foreign markets to collapse, the German ruling class will have shot itself in the foot since its economy is so highly export-oriented. Even within the central axis of the EU—France and Germany—there are differences. While France is suffering from a trade deficit of 32 billion euros, Germany has amassed a 73 billion euro export surplus relative to the other euro zone countries.

The SPD and trade unions have contributed to the austerity diktat by promoting the protectionist scheme "Standort Deutschland." Among its spawn is "Agenda 2010" with its massive cuts in wages, expansion of contract labor and the like. Other European capitalists can see how these increased the rate of profit for the German bourgeoisie and consider them worth copying in their own countries. Conversely, the assaults on the Greek working class provide a model for attacks elsewhere.

Fake Trotskyists Tail Syriza

While supporting the capitalist EU, Syriza campaigned against the Troika's austerity memorandum and argued for renegotiating the conditions that were set. Syriza chair Alexis Tsipras has promised economic and political stability and is in favor of working with the Troika to provide Greek banks with new capital. Many reformist groups in and outside Greece have signed up as water boys for Syriza, e.g., the Grantites of Marxistiki Foni and the Cliffites of the Democratic Workers Left (DEA), who are linked to the International Socialist Organization in the U.S.

The DEA portrayed its support to Syriza as proletarian internationalism and said, "We are confronting the fact that in a month's time, Syriza will be the leading party in the country. So we will he called on at that point to form a government that can transform things for the people of Greece" (*Socialist Worker* [U.S.], 23 May 2012). Then there is the Antarsya coalition, in which the Cliffite SEK as well the OKDE-Spartakos of the Pabloite United Secretariat (USec) participate. Antarsya ran its own candidates in the elections. Their intent was to pressure Syriza and use it to strengthen the "resistance." Leading British SWPer Alex Callinicos said: "Antarsya has made it clear that it sees itself working alongside and in dialogue with those who support Syriza. The stronger its voice is, the greater the pressure will be on Syriza" (*Socialist Worker* [Britain], 2 June 2012). Particularly charming was that the USec, the "International" of OKDE-Spartakos, didn't even support the candidates of its own section in Greece but rather those of Syriza!

All these reformist groups are not about socialism but rather are fighting for a "government of the left" with better policies, which is nothing but a capitalist government. At their core, such politics are pro-EU and pro-capitalist. Illusions in a left capitalist government are an obstacle to leading the working class on the path to revolution, for which the political independence of the working class is indispensable. Racism, poverty, exploitation and imperialist dominance cannot be ended through reformist pressure politics but only through the seizure of power by the working class. And for this what is needed is an authentic Leninist-Trotskyist party.

Greek Trotskyists Said: Vote KKE! No Vote for Syriza!

We gave critical support to the KKE in the June elections. Our starting point as Marxists is that the working class cannot achieve significant victories through bourgeois elections, but we do utilize them as an opportunity to attain a hearing among broader masses of workers. For this, we also employ tactics like critical electoral support.

On the otber hand, reformists, whether supporters of the DEA, Antarsya or the anarchists, fundamentally share a bourgeois conception of elections. While the reformists helieve that a better system can be attained through elections, the anarchists think that if people didn't vote the system would break down. I was there and assisted our comrades of the Greek section in their critical support campaign. We had some discussion with people from Antarsya, but it was amusing to talk with the anarchists in their center "Notios." They'd probably never voted before in their lives, but now they were tying themselves in knots and admitted that they were going to vote for Antarsya or Syriza—but really only as "lesser evils"!

We approach bourgeois elections from a revolutionary standpoint. Of course, we're willing to employ the talk shop of parliament as a platform, but we make clear to the masses that the core of the state is special bodies of armed men like

continued on page 10

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Greece...

(continued from page 9)

the police, the army and prisons. This core is not subject to election and is not reformable. Marx concluded that the state had to be smashed and destroyed in the course of a revolution if the capitalist system was to be overthrown. Reformism helps keep capitalism alive. Our campaign offering critical support provided us with the opportunity to talk with members of the KKE, and naturally with other leftists as well, about the KKE's program and our own.

Generally, it's difficult to approach KKE members at major demonstrations and forums. It's a very well-organized reformist, Stalinist mass party. A genuine phenomenon: being face-to-face with a Stalinist party with hundreds of thousands of supporters twenty years after counterrevolution in the USSR and East Europe, a party deeply rooted in society and the historic party of the Greek working class. They have a daily paper, many members of parliament and have the trust of the most politically advanced workers in Greece. Anyone who's been in Greece and seen a KKE demo—well, it's very impressive how well organized they are. And we were able to come into much more contact with them as a result of our campaign. In any case, we're almost the only leftists to approach the KKE and talk with them since other leftists won't debate the KKE out of anti-Communism.

The basis for our critical support was the KKE's refusal to join with Syriza in building a coalition of the left. The British SWP and SEK immediately termed the KKE's position "sectarian"—a very popular term of reproof. Additionally, the KKE was for canceling the Greek debt and had for some time called for withdrawal from the EU and NATO. We put out a flyer "Vote KKE! No Vote for Syriza!" (see *WV* No. 1005, 6 July 2012). Had the KKE won the elections, it would have been a black eye for the EU and the Greek bourgeoisie.

The Greek section's campaign was supported by an international team of comrades from the U.S., Britain, France and Germany. Critical electoral support, of course, means that we're also critical. Central to our criticism is the KKE's nationalism, expressed for example in their terming

Reuters

Athens, January 9: Police arrest anarchists occupying offices of Democratic Left party in protest against repression.

themselves patriots and continually talking about the "people." This is an anti-Marxist concept because "the people" also includes the class enemy of the Greek workers, the Greek bourgeoisie, while excluding their most important allies, such as the Turkish or German proletariat.

In discussions with KKE members they say, "Of course, the Greek bourgeoisie isn't part of the people." Nonetheless, it's a concept that is diametrically opposed to a class understanding. At the same time, the slogan "Workers of the World, Unite!" always appears on the title page of the KKE paper *Rizospastis*. This is, of course, a contradiction. The KKE argues for making use of Greece's resources in the interests of the Greek people, an expression of the Stalinist program of building "socialism in one country." The concept of socialism in Greece alone, with an economy largely based on tourism and ownership of an international merchant fleet, is a bit ridiculous. This is even more so the case when you consider that it didn't work out in one of the most resource-rich countries on earth, namely the Soviet Union.

The Bolshevik Party under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky was internationalist through and through, and this enabled it to lead the multinational working class of tsarist Russia to power in the October Revolution of 1917. It was clear to the Bolsheviks that the revolution could not be maintained over the long term, nor could socialism be constructed, as long as the Soviet workers state remained isolated. Socialism is based on abundance for all, which will be brought about through the all-sided development of the most modern forces of production, socialist planning and an international division of labor. For the Bolsheviks, the October Revolution was to be the first in a series of revolutions around the world, and they founded the Third (Communist) International as the instrument for the working class to conquer power in other countries.

Due to the sustained isolation, poverty and backwardness of the newly founded Soviet Union, a bureaucratic caste arose that usurped power in a political counterrevolution in early 1924. The theory of building "socialism in one country" promulgated by Stalin in late 1924 codified the conservatism of this bureaucratic layer. This layer feared the proletariat, against whom it defended its privileges, and sought to make peace with the imperialist powers. Simultaneously, its privileges were derived from the collectivized economy of the Soviet Union, where the capitalist class had been expropriated. At every turn, the Left Opposition led by Trotsky battled the degeneration of the Soviet Union and the Communist International. In the Trotskyist analysis, the Soviet Union became a bureaucratically degenerated workers state. The imperialists confronted the Soviet Union with unyielding hostility despite all its attempts at appeasement.

For a Leninist-Trotskyist Party!

Virtually every fake Trotskyist current on the planet is represented in Greece, and their rotten politics have given Trotskyism a bad name—it is often seen as anti-Communist and social-democratic. When we were doing election campaigning at 6 a.m. in Athens' port of Piraeus, someone turned and asked, "How come Trotskyists are supporting the Stalinists?" and he started a debate. Our Greek group doesn't share the petty-bourgeois, anti-Communist prejudices of other leftists. And in order to make a revolution in Greece and the rest of the Balkans, you must break the working class from its false leadership and win it to a genuinely Leninist-Trotskyist party.

Other questions played a large role in the founding of our Greek section in 2004. The woman question is a truly central one for Greece. One example is the bride price, which was officially done away with only in 1986. Greece is not a secular country, there are Orthodox priests running around everywhere, all the time—I even observed a woman confessing on the street. Another example: the schools are blessed every year. When the government is sworn in, a priest is present. The questions of the church, capitalism and women's oppression go hand in hand. One can fight for the liberation of women only if one fights to overthrow capitalism, and one cannot overthrow capitalism if one doesn't fight for women's liberation.

The Balkans are a veritable mosaic of national minorities, and if you lack a program to address the national question, then you really can't be a proletarian revolutionary. Hence, this was an important point in the founding of our Greek section. You really need an internationalist perspective, otherwise all there will be is national oppression and the spilling of blood, only a fight for a Greater Bulgaria or a Greater Greece, which is counterposed to socialism and all-sided liberation, i.e., to the interests of the multinational working class of the Balkans.

The other important question is Cyprus. We struggle against the all-pervasive anti-Turkish chauvinism in Greece. Turkey is, after all, the historic enemy of the Greek bourgeoisie, but the Turkish proletariat is not the enemy of the Greek working class. On the contrary, it is really its most important ally. Thus, we call for the withdrawal of all troops from Cyprus—Greek, Turkish, British and UN. In contrast, the Greek left, including the KKE, tells you only how bad the Turkish troops are.

The KKE's program contains a whole series of reformist demands right down to nationalist positions in defense of Greece's boundaries, but it also contains a lot of rhetoric that suggests socialism sometime in the future. However, the Greek CP lacks any program that would link up the necessary struggle for people's daily needs with the struggle for the conquest of power by the working class. And this is really the main task of a revolutionary Trotskyist party, preparing our class and leading it to power. Our role as a small international propaganda group is to lay the basis for the construction of such a party, a party that will be part of the reforged Fourth International, which we fight for here in Germany as well. ■

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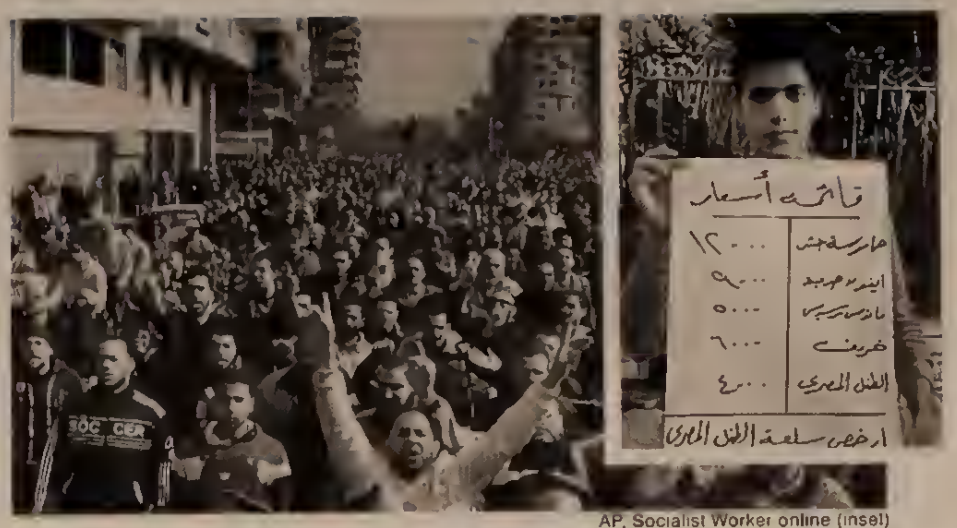
Egypt...

(continued from page 3)

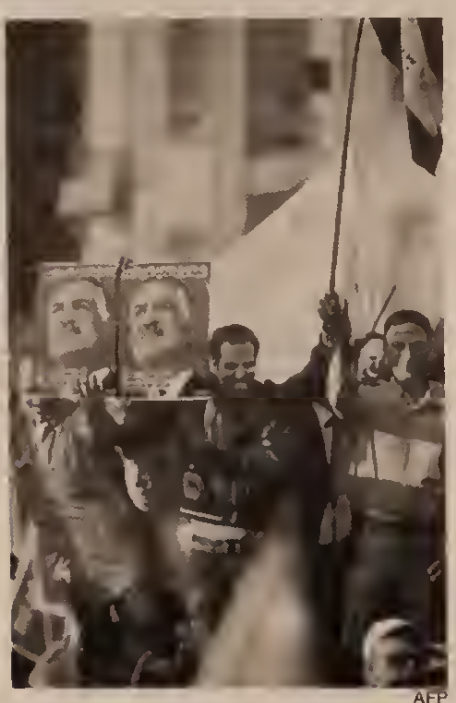
Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) "has no intention of abandoning the basic tenets of capitalism in Egypt," Mostafa Ali, an RS founding leader, touted the SCAF's openness to "pressure" from the masses: "Despite its repressive measures, the Supreme Council understands that the January 25 uprising has changed Egypt once and for all in certain ways. The generals understand the depth of revolutionary feelings among the poor, and they therefore have no intention of trying to return to the way the regime operated before January 25" (*Socialist Worker* [U.S.], 31 May 2011). In fact, after it took over from Mubarak, the SCAF strengthened the police powers of the state and put the clamps on social unrest.

In a subsequent interview, Ali's RS cohort Hossam el-Hamalawy explained the real story: "In February or March if you would have chanted against the army generals in a protest you could have been lynched by the people themselves—not by the military police—I mean by the people. Many people believed the lies and the propaganda of the army at the time about them protecting the revolution" (newsocialist.org, 10 December 2011). To swim against the stream, to debunk such lies, to insist on the political independence of the proletariat is precisely the task of Leninists. The Cliffites offered the very opposite: crude tailism in the service of dissolving the working class into "the people."



AP, Socialist Worker online (inset)

Port Said, January 28: Funeral procession for protesters gunned down by security forces the previous day. Ahmad Sami (inset), 17-year-old RS member, killed by police on January 26.



AFP

30 November 2012: Anti-Morsi demonstrators at Tahrir Square evoke secular-nationalist regime of military strongman Gamal Abdel Nasser.

The seeds for the Cliff tendency's tailing of political Islam were planted in 1950 when these renegades broke from the Trotskyist Fourth International. Bending to the pressures of Cold War hysteria, Tony Cliff and his supporters capitulated to British imperialism and refused to defend the Soviet Union, China and North Korea against imperialist attack during the Korean War. Notably, it was a Labour government that had dispatched British troops to Korea. Ever since, the Cliffites have been hostile toward all those countries where capitalism has been overthrown. (See "The Bankruptcy of 'New Class' Theories—Tony Cliff and Max Shachtman: Pro-Imperialist Accomplices of Counterrevolution," *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 55, Autumn 1999.)

Such a position allowed the SWP to comfortably inhabit the swamp of Labourism in Britain. The counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state in 1991-92, a world historic defeat for the proletariat, was grotesquely celebrated not only by the imperialists but also by the SWP and ISO. "Untainted" by any association with communism, Cliff & Co. figured they could cash in, not least by redoubling their efforts in tailing after resurgent political Islam. For this task they were well prepared, having in 1979 bowed to Iran's Khomeini, who considered the Soviet Union the greatest of all "great Satans," and cheered the CIA-backed *mujahedin* against the intervention of the Soviet Red Army in Afghanistan on the side of social progress and in defense of the USSR's southern flank.

Steeped in anti-Communist violence, the Muslim Brotherhood provided a major contingent of those *mujahedin*. During the first Cold War, the U.S. imperialists had made common cause with these Islamic reactionaries and the Saudi monarchy in efforts to destabilize the nationalist regime of Gamal Abdel Nasser, which was allied with Moscow. Before its overthrow by Nasser's Free Officers Movement in 1952, the Egyptian monarchy turned to the Islamists to slaughter Communists and other political opponents as well as to break workers strikes. Nasser himself briefly embraced the Brotherhood as a club against the workers movement before ruthlessly suppressing it. His successor, Anwar el-Sadat, unleashed the Brotherhood with knives in hand to crush the Communists on the campuses in the 1970s, while Mubarak alternately suppressed them and tolerated their growth for his own purposes.

Before Morsi's election, the Islamists had already waged vicious campaigns against the RS. In late 2011, the newspaper of the Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party ran a front-page article violence-baiting the RS, while the Salafist Al-Nour Party accused it of "anarchy" and being on the CIA payroll—an incitement to imprisonment or worse. In Tunisia today, the Salafists are notorious for physically attacking striking workers and anti-government protesters.

Even as the Cliffites welcomed the ascendancy of the fundamentalist butchers, many other supposed leftists expressed concern over the fate of the "Egyptian Revolution." But the reality is that the January 2011 uprising was ***not*** a revolution. The Mubarak regime was toppled, but capitalist class rule remains, as do its pillars, the army and religious reaction. The liberation of the Egyptian masses cannot be carried out by, or in alliance with, the capitalist exploiters, military or Islamic clergy. Such requires the seizure of power by the working class, fighting to extend its victory throughout North Africa and the Near East and to the imperialist centers. This program of permanent revolution is based on the understanding that in countries of belated capitalist development the bourgeoisie is too weak, backward and dependent on imperialism to achieve modernization and all-round development.

Political Bandits Exposed

Fraudulently posing as "orthodox" Marxist critics, David North's World Socialist Web Site (WSWS) has recently issued a barrage of polemics against the RS and SWP over Egypt. This is pretty cheeky coming from these political bandits. As has been well-documented, including by themselves, the Northite outfit's direct predecessors (led by Gerry Healy of the British Workers Revolutionary Party, with North as one of his U.S. Workers League lieutenants) did not prettify reactionary Middle East despots free of charge – they did so in return for cold, hard cash.

While serving as press agents for the likes of Muammar el-Qaddafi and Iraq's Ba'ath regime, Healy & Co.—including North—hailed the 1978 execution of 21 members of the Iraqi Communist Party (CP). The CP had been the mass party of the proletariat with a militant tradition. In our article "Healyites: Kill a Commie for Qaddafi," we observed, "The Stalinist cadres in the Iraqi army, despite their class-collaborationist politics, are a hundredfold more courageous than Qaddafi's yellow journalists in Clapham High Street [Healy's headquarters]" (*WV* No. 230, 27 April 1979).

AFP

Photo distributed in January 1980 by CIA-backed *mujahedin* cutthroats in Afghanistan shows murder of high school teacher near Kandahar.

The Northites certainly had no beef with political Islam when the imperialists fostered it as a bulwark against the Soviet Union. Indeed, Healy/North backed every force that was hostile to the USSR, including the Islamic reactionaries pitted against the Red Army in Afghanistan. Similarly over Iran, the Northites were indistinguishable from the Cliff tendency and almost the entire rest of the left in enthusing over Khomeini, headlining their *Bulletin* newspaper: "Long Live the Iranian Revolution!" (16 February 1979).

We said: "Down with the Shah! No support to the mullahs! For workers revolution in Iran!" The Healy/North hirelings duly slandered us: "If the antics of the Spartacist [sic] were directly orchestrated by the FBI and the CIA, they could not be more provocative," (*Bulletin*, 1 May 1979). Tragically, horribly, our warnings against the left's embrace of Khomeini and the mullahs as "anti-imperialist" were proved correct. The opening act of the "Islamic revolution" was a reign of terror against the left, the workers movement, women and religious and ethnic minorities.

As for its polemics, the WSWS arguments are made, as the Northites like to say, in "utterly bad faith." One arrow always in the Northite quiver is smearing their political opponents. In the article "Egyptian Liberal, Pseudo-Left Groups Demonstrate against Mursi" (23 October 2012), the WSWS echoes the Salafist accusations against the RS: "The CTUWS [Center for Trade Union and Workers Services] is sponsored by the AFL-CIO, and ***like the RS, the April 6 Movement and other pseudo-left groups, has close ties to Washington***" (emphasis ours). There is no further elaboration of this claim of RS "ties to Washington." We warn the workers movement again: beware this outfit that will fly any flag to attack any target.

At the time of the "Islamic revolution," we predicted that the anti-Marxist methodology that led to supporting Islamic reaction in Iran would also lead to "supporting the Khomeinis of Egypt" (*WV* No. 229, 13 April 1979). The SWP, RS and ISO are now proof positive. ■

Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

CHICAGO

Wednesday, February 13, 7 p.m.

The Capitalist State: An Instrument for Organized Terror

University of Chicago, Reynolds Club
5706 South University
Information and readings:
(312) 563-0441 • chicagosyc@sbcglobal.net

LOS ANGELES

Tuesday, February 19, 6:30 p.m.

Gun Control Schemes, State Repression and the Need for Socialist Revolution

Meet at Meyerhoff Park, UCLA
Information and readings:
(213) 380-8239 • slsycla@sbcglobal.net

NEW YORK CITY

Tuesday, February 19, 7 p.m.

For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution: A Marxist Analysis of Black Oppression

CCNY, NAC Room 1/211
138th St. and Amsterdam Ave.
Information and readings
(212) 267-1025 • nysl@tiac.net

TORONTO

Wednesday, February 13, 6:30 p.m.

Marxism and the National Question: Independence for Quebec!

University of Toronto, Sidney Smith Hall
100 St. George Street, Room TBA

Wednesday, March 13, 6:30 p.m.

For Free Abortion on Demand! Women's Oppression and Revolutionary Marxism

University of Toronto, Sidney Smith Hall
100 St. George Street, Room TBA
Information and readings:
(416) 593-4138 • spartcan@on.aibn.com

VANCOUVER

Thursday, February 28, 7 p.m.

Down With Tories' War on Women's Rights! For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

UBC, Irving Barber Learning Centre
Room 460
Information and readings:
(604) 687-0353
trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com

Visit the ICL Web Site:
www.icl-fi.org

WORKERS VANGUARD

Down With the Capitalist EU! For a Workers Europe!

Reuters

AP

Left: Riot police attack trade unionists from Communist-led PAME protesting outside Labor Ministry in Athens, January 30. Right: Athens metro workers burn strikebreaking "civil mobilization" order, January 25.

Greek Workers Battle Austerity, State Repression

FEBRUARY 5—In the early morning hours of January 25, Greek riot police stormed the main train depot of the Athens metro system, breaking up an occupation by striking workers who had courageously defied the government and courts by keeping the metro shut down for nine days. Strikers were served with orders to return to work or face imprisonment and firing under a government "civil mobilization" order issued the day before. "Civil mobilization" was invoked again today to break a seamen's strike, which has for six days paralyzed ferry service between the mainland and Greece's many islands. A form of martial law for so-called peacetime emergencies, it is an open declaration of war on the working class. Its name harks back to the civil mobilization decrees for forced labor that the Nazi occupiers issued during World War II, which were turned into a dead letter in Greece by mass protests and general strikes in 1943.

As soon as the widely-despised coalition government of the right-wing New Democracy (ND), the bourgeois Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) and the Democratic Left announced the "civil mobilization" order against the metro workers last week, bus and trolley workers began a four-day-long solidarity strike, holding out in defiance of court orders deeming their strike illegal. The public power workers also organized a 24-hour strike in solidarity with the metro workers on January 31. The government is now planning to ban such solidarity strikes.

In breaking the metro workers strike and now taking aim at the seamen, the Greek government has made it perfectly clear that it intends to crush all resistance to the increasingly savage rounds of austerity measures. The government crackdown on the unions comes on the heels of the arrest of 100 anarchist activists in Athens in December and January, and a bourgeois propaganda campaign to smear the entire left as "terrorists." Bonapartist pronouncements are the order of the day, with the Minister of Public Order Nikos Dendias ominously stating that "the country must finally settle its accounts with the post-1974 era." This is a reference to the period following the fall of the bloody military junta that ruled from 1967-74, that is, the beginning of the current period of bourgeois democracy in Greece.

The wave of strikes sweeping Greece has been sparked by the implementation of a further $17.25 billion in killer cuts to wages, benefits and social services. This is the price that the imperialist masters of the European Union (EU) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) demanded the Greek working people pay in exchange for billions more in bailout money for the bloodsucking banks of the EU and the Greek bourgeoisie. With massive unemployment and poverty ravaging the country, the metro workers and other public sector workers now face pay cuts of up to 25 percent, having already lost on average nearly half their income through successive rounds of cuts since the start of the economic crisis. Even as wages are repeatedly slashed, inflation keeps rising, and the government levies more and more taxes on the necessities of life, like heating oil. Athens and Thessaloniki have been blanketed with toxic smog this winter because people have been forced to burn wood to stay warm.

The fascist menace of Golden Dawn continues to grow—its sympathizers claimed yet another victim with the racist murder of 27-year-old Pakistani immigrant worker Shehzad Luqman on January 17 in Athens. The police, many of them supporters of Golden Dawn, also terrorize immigrants and foreigners. On February 1, the Athens police chased a Senegalese immigrant onto metro tracks where he was electrocuted. They later tear-gassed people protesting this crime. Since Greece completed its border fence with Turkey in December, more than 20 desperate immigrants have drowned in the Aegean Sea trying to reach Greek islands off the Turkish coast as an entry point to the EU.

As the worldwide capitalist financial crisis continues and the economic and military ravages of imperialism drive millions more to leave their home countries in search of an escape from abject poverty, it is crucial for the workers movement to take up the fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants. Furthermore, it is a basic measure of self-defense of the unions and the working class in Greece, with its heavy immigrant component, to mobilize in mass united-front actions to crush the fascist scum of Golden Dawn. As our comrades of the Trotskyist Group of Greece explained in their November 2012 leaflet "Capitalists Bleed Greek Working Class" (reprinted in *WV* No. 1013, 23 November 2012):

> "What is necessary is to fight to remove the political obstacles to mobilizing the power of the trade unions against Golden Dawn. The KKE [Communist Party of Greece] has the social weight in the trade unions to take the lead in doing this, but its promotion of illusions in bourgeois democracy and its nationalist populism are barriers. The reformist organizations that compose groups such as Antarsya also reinforce the political obstacles, in particular by tailing the pro-EU Syriza coalition, which promises to provide immigrants more 'humane' conditions of imprisonment and to put more cops on the streets to fight 'crime'."

A January 19 demonstration in Athens was organized by KEERFA, an "anti-fascist front" led by the Socialist Workers Party (SEK), which is affiliated with the British SWP and part of the Antarsya coalition. However, the SEK's pretensions to be fighters against fascism were exposed by a grotesque article called "Patriotism and Internationalism" (*Workers Solidarity*, 9 January), which argues that nationalism and internationalism are "synonymous and interdependent." The SEK perpetuates the lie that there is a common national interest between the exploiters and the exploited: "The national (identity) connects him [the worker] with all his fellow countrymen with whom he fights to resolve the different national issues."

Genuine Marxists are staunch opponents of nationalism, a bourgeois ideology that serves to tie workers to the class enemy. In Greece, nationalism means the oppression of national minorities such as the Macedonians, Vlachs, Pomaks, Turks and Albanians. Our comrades of the TGG fight for full democratic rights for the national minorities, for the right of self-determination for the Macedonian

continued on page 8

Trotskyist Group of Greece

Athens, January 19: Anti-fascist demonstrators protest racist murder of Pakistani immigrant Shehzad Luqman.

WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 1018

22 February 2013

Obama's Kill List and Imperialist Terror

MQ-9 Reaper drone

U.S. Air Force

In one respect at least, Barack Obama's pitch for hipartisanship in Washington is paying off. From liberal Democrats to the Republican right, the two parties of U.S. capitalism responded to the Department of Justice White Paper justifying assassinations of U.S. citizens hy overwhelmingly hailing this augmentation of the lethal powers of the imperial presidency. Obtained by NBC News, the previously secret document confirms what was already known: the executive branch of the government can assassinate a U.S. citizen anywhere, anytime, without even the pretense of judicial oversighl. Obama asserted this principle with his "targeted killings" of Anwar al-Awlaki, Samir Khan and al-Awlaki's 16-year-old son, Abdulrahman al-Awlaki—all U.S. citizens—in Yemen in 2011. Those assassinations are but a tiny fraction of the murderous toll of U.S. imperialist terror on the people of Yemen, not to mention Afghanistan and Pakistan.

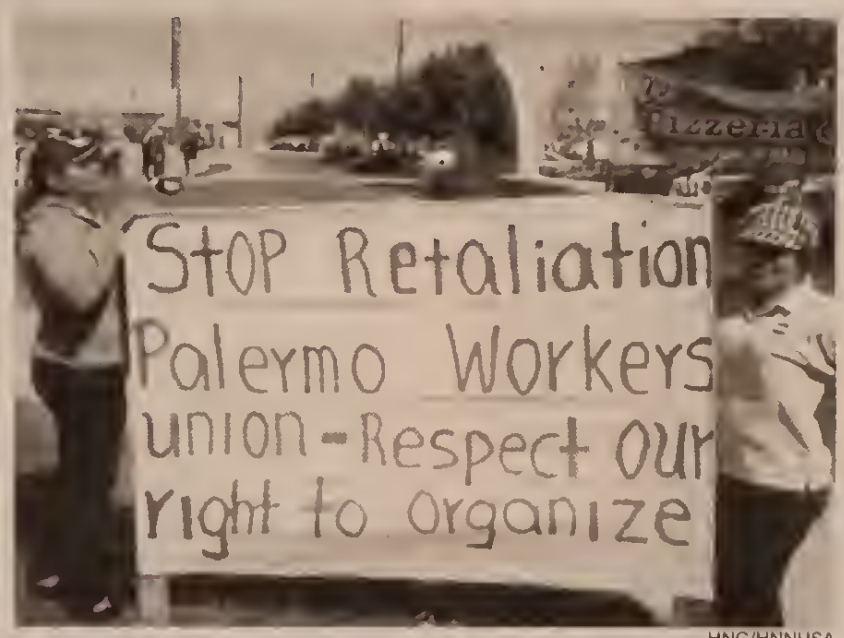
As described by Glenn Greenwald in the London *Guardian* (5 February): "The president's underlings compile their proposed lists of who should be executed, and the president—at a charming weekly event dubbed by White House aides as 'Terror Tuesday'—then chooses from

continued on page 10

Immigration "Reform": Repression and Exploitation

Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants!

AP



HNG/HNNUSA

Left: Immigrants arrested by local cops and federal agents, Phoenix, Arizona, 2010. Right: Palermo's Pizza factory workers strike against mass firings of immigrant co-workers in "desktop" raid designed to sabotage unionization effort, Milwaukee, June 2012.

Barack Obama's re-election last November was hailed by liberal commentators as a confirmation of the "historic" and "consequential" nature of his presidency. For many others, it seemed to signal a rejection of the reactionary brew of bigotries and threats of savage austerity that were the bedrock of Mitt Romney's candidacy. The president had wooed Latino voters with promises of immigration "reform" while his opponent urged "self-deportation." A key consideration for Obama is that the corporate bosses of important sectors of industry, e.g., agribusiness, manufacturing and information technology, have suffered from a drought of both low-wage manual and highly skilled immigrant lahor that has adversely impacted their profits. On January 21, Ohama kicked off his second term hy renewing the push to overhaul immigration policy. "Our journey is not complete," he intoned, "until bright young students and engineers are enlisted in our workforce rather than expelled from our country."

The White House hlazed the trail for that "journey" out of the U.S. With 410,000 deportations in 2012, the administration set a new record for the fourth consecutive year in its escalating war against "illegal" immigration. Over 1,000 people are deported every day even as attempted border crossings have dropped hy 53 percent since 2008, a sign of the greatly diminished prospects for employment in the U.S. Officials have widened the anti-immigrant dragnet by trolling state DMV records for information on foreign-born applicants and dispatching agents to traffic safety checkpoints to detain anyone without a driver's license. These "great unwashed" are apparently of little weight in the administration's calculations, as against the talented engineers.

In the State of the Union address on Fehruary 12, Ohama touted his administration's "putting more boots on the southern border than at any time in our history." Washington also poured more money into policing immigration last year than all other federal law enforcement projects combined. A formidable machinery is now in place on the border: over 21,000 agents along with thousands of thermal-imaging sensors, a fleet of aerial drones and nearly 700 miles of fence. Between 2007 and 2011, the rate of reported deaths of those attempting to cross vastly increased—over 350 such deaths were acknowledged each year.

Following the 2012 elections, more savvy Repuhlican politicians noted that their party had failed to attract the votes of certain sectors of the U.S. population—to name a few, black people, women, Latinos, Asian Americans and youth—and timidly ventured the opinion that it needed to expand its appeal. As the Republican Party has deep roots in the South and among those given to religious fanaticism, not much room is available for a wiggle to the left, rendering difficult the search for support from those who are not older white male bigots. Nevertheless, certain Republicans, notably John McCain and Marco Rubio, last month joined hands with a passel of Democrats to put forward an immigration reform proposal in the Senate.

In theory, Obama should have little problem coming to an agreement with this bipartisan effort. The day after the announcement of their proposal, a White House memo laid out its own plan for immigration reform: further securing the border and intensifying the crackdown on undocumented workers under the guise of penalizing employers on the one hand and offering a remote possibility of citizenship and streamlining legal immigration on the other. These points are almost identical to those raised hy the Senators save the not insignificant detail that for them the borders must he closed, not merely "defended." This difference opens up the possihility of unending hours of debate in Congress as it awaits the placement of the last stone in the great wall, deemed

continued on page 11

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Class, Race and the Black Struggle in the U.S.

Claude McKay, a Jamaican-born poet active on the left in the U.S. and Britain, traveled to Soviet Russia for the Fourth Congress of the Communist International in November 1922. In his presentation at the Congress (reprinted in "Blacks and Bolsheviks," *Black History and the Class Struggle* No. 5, February 1988), McKay stressed the centrality of black oppression to American capitalism and criticized American Communists for not adequately addressing this issue. It took the intervention of the Comintern to get the American Communists to begin to actively fight for black rights.

At the time of the Congress, he drafted notes about the situation of black people in the United States, the Caribbean and Africa. The notes are unsigned, but McKay referred to them in other correspondence. We print below excerpts from the sections on the black struggle in the U.S., which we obtained from Tamiment Library at New York University. The original is in the Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI) in Moscow. In his notes, McKay refers to the African Blood Brotherhood, a Harlem-based organization, mainly comprising Caribbean immigrants, whose leadership had recently joined the American Communist Party.

* * *

During the World War the economic status of the Negro Race in the New World underwent a swift transition for the better. Especially was this the case in the United States where, on account of the giant war industries and the shutting down of immigration, the services of Negro workers were greatly in demand in the northern industrial zone. During this period it is estimated that over 500,000 Negro workers left the South for jobs in the less hostile atmosphere of the North.

Along with the improvement in their economic status came a great wave of emotional racialism, aroused in part by the wrongs suffered by the race and the sacrifices it was called upon to make for "World Democracy," as well as by the fine democratic phrases with which the Entente statesmen were gassing the credulous liberals of their own countries and misleading the peoples of the colonies. This racialism among the Negro workers at first took the form of a proletariat movement but has been to a great extent perverted by subsequent activities of opportunists and charlatans with their cowardly compromises and surrenders and their grafting of all sorts of stock schemes upon the mass movement....

The prey of unscrupulous leaders who glibly promised everything but accomplished nothing save the periodical emptying of the pockets of their credulous followers, the Negro masses are discouraged and suspicious, yet there are organizational possibilities on a wide scale for any organization that can, first, win their confidence and, second, push energetically the campaign of organizing and, third, *keep up interest in the organization*.

The Negro masses are leavened by an increasingly large body of *race radicals* and *class radicals*. The former are Negroes who, while roused to thought and action by the wrongs of the race, have not yet recognized the essential class nature of the struggle, nor the exact cause and source of their oppression, which they blame indiscriminately upon the entire white race. They are, however, generally inclined to side with and follow the leadership of the class radicals who, fully cognizant of the value of race radicalism for rousing the masses and as a natural and necessary step toward class radicalism, have not been slow in utilizing it and even in helping in its development.

Comparatively few Negro workers are in the unions for the reason that, until recently, they were almost universally barred from the ranks of Organized Labor. However, several thousand are now unionized. Some in the regular unions, but many in segregated unions which are generally affiliated with the national bodies.

Most of the class radicals are to be found in the ranks of the "African Blood Brotherhood" and the "Friends of Negro Freedom"—the latter an organization backed by the Socialist Party of America; the former said to have Communist tendencies.

A large group of race radicals are also in the African Blood Brotherhood (which makes a race as well as a class appeal); and a larger group in the so-called "Garvey Movement" of "Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities' League." The true race radical should not be confused, however, with the motley crowd of fanatics, emotionalists, title and tinsel worshippers who make up the huge mass of the Garvey organization....

The petit-bourgeoisie, with whom the race is honeycombed, find expression chiefly in the "National Association for the Advancement of Colored People," in which a group of bourgeois gentlemen (colored and white) and gentlemen who, while lacking the bourgeois gold, carry around the bourgeois psychology, dominate a large but not compactly organized or effectively functioning body of workers and professionals. The domination of the bourgeoisie is here more open and complete than in the Garvey Movement which, while cursed with petit-bourgeoisie for leaders, has a rank and file wholly made up of workers, and the bourgeoisie in the latter movement have been accordingly forced to resort to camouflage tactics. The compact organization of the Garvey Movement, together with the mighty enthusiasm and blind fanaticism of most of its membership have made it in the past more of an obstacle to the proper prosecution of the Negro Liberation Struggle than has been the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People....

As is well-known, the Negro workers are the most viciously oppressed and poorly paid of any group of workers in the United States. No matter what a Negro's ability and fitness there are positions which he may not fill and trades whose doors are closed to him. As a rule, only the most menial jobs are open to him during normal times. Made to believe that the antagonistic attitude of Organized Labor is wholly responsible for his exclusion from the better-paid industries, he becomes a willing—and often a joyous—tool of the Interests, and a scab in times of crisis for Organized Labor. He knows that in numerous instances White Labor opposes his employment. He knows, too, of frequent and widely heralded "philanthropies" to his race—by way of subsidies to Negro colleges, etc.—on the part of the White Bourgeoisie and being at least as backward as White Labor, which by its silly prejudices splits the ranks of Labor, he is not able to see the facts as they really are.... His doubts are further increased when he is shown that the white bourgeoisie controls the press, the schools, the churches, the theatres, etc., in which race prejudice is engendered and promoted....

And this leads naturally to a consideration of the present aspirations of the Negro Race. The vast masses of the race in America have only the very simplest aspirations, viz: to be permitted to live and eke out a mean and miserable existence in peace. Of the various groups that rise above this low level, the aspirations of some are confined to safety of life and property and the protection of their women from insult and rape at the hands of white men. Other groups would have political equality in addition; while the most progressive groups demand nothing less than full equality: political, economic, racial; and the abolition of human exploitation. ■

Claude McKay, 1922

Beinecke Library

Moscow, 1922: Jamaican-born poet Claude McKay speaking on racial oppression in U.S. at Fourth Congress of Communist International.

WORKERS VANGUARD

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Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.

The closing date for news in this issue is February 19.

No. 1018 **22 February 2013**

Spartacist Black History Forums

150 Years Since the Emancipation Proclamation
Finish the Civil War!

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Britain 1919: Class Struggle, Racism and Labour Reformism

The following article, reprinted from Workers Hammer *No. 221 (Winter 2012-2013), is based on remarks made by an ICL comrade in the discussion following Jacob Zumoff's presentation at the Historical Materialism conference in London in November 2012. The presentation was previously published as "The Black Freedom Struggle and the Comintern" in* WV *No. 1006 (3 August 2012).*

The intervention of the Comintern into the newly founded Communist Party in the United States that provided a corrective on the black question was part of a broader effort to impart the lessons of the Bolshevik revolution to the fledgling Communist parties internationally. The American party had the considerable advantage over its British counterpart of having been forged from among the most vibrant elements of the left at that time, including many immigrants, syndicalists and others who formed the left wing of the socialist movement. The Comintern sought to regroup into its ranks those sections of the working-class movement that were breaking from the Second International during and after World War I. In Britain, the task was to win those elements who rejected the treacherous Labour leaders to the concept of a Leninist party.

The year 1919 saw a proletarian upheaval in Britain that shook capitalist rule to its foundations. Soldiers returning from the trenches of the interimperialist slaughter faced economic slump, poor housing and a scramble for a dwindling number of jobs. The demobilised soldiers

Herald & Times

Red Clydeside, January 1919: Workers demonstrate in Glasgow's George Square during general strike.

included a number of young black men from Britain's former colonies, who often bore the brunt of vile racism. Asians, blacks and other minorities were scapegoated, including by Labour leaders, for the rising unemployment level that was caused by the capitalist system.

In 1919 Claude McKay, a young black man who grew up in Jamaica, moved from the U.S. to London where he lived until 1921. By the time he arrived in London McKay was a committed socialist and radical poet. He was appalled by the level of racism he encountered, not least among Labour Party and trade-union leaders whom he had previously admired. George Bernard Shaw, the person McKay most wanted to meet in London, saw fit to ask why he chose to become a poet rather than a boxer.

McKay was in London during a grotesque racist propaganda campaign led by E.D. Morel, a supporter of the Independent Labour Party who campaigned against the enslavement of blacks in the Congo under Belgian King Leopold. Morel was incensed by the presence of black troops in the French army of occupation in the German Ruhr following World War II. The *Daily Herald* published Morel's racist tirade under the grotesque headline: "BLACK SCOURGE IN EUROPE" and railed about "Sexual Horror Let Loose by France on the Rhine." An expanded version of this filth was distributed as a pamphlet to delegates attending the annual Trades Union Congress in 1920.

McKay wrote a letter to the *Daily Herald* protesting Morel's campaign. But the letter was returned to him by the editor of that time, George Lansbury, a prominent Labour "left" figure who assured McKay that he was not personally prejudiced against black people, but refused to publish his letter. Lansbury led the Labour council that was elected in 1920 in Poplar, east London. To this day "Poplarism" remains a model for the reformist left, who foster the illusion that the interests of the working class can be served by administering the capitalist state at local council level. (See "When Militant Ran Liverpool: Down With Executive Offices of the Capitalist State!" *Workers Hammer* No. 210, Spring 2010 [reprinted in *WV* No. 957, 23 April 2010].)

In the letter that Lansbury refused to publish McKay said:

> "I do not protest because I happen to be a negro...I write because I feel that the ultimate result of your propaganda will be further strife and blood-spilling between the whites and the many members of my race, boycotted economically and socially, who have been dumped down on the English docks since the ending of the European War."
>
> —Quoted in *Staying Power*, Peter Fryer (1984)

McKay is referring to a shameful campaign in the ports by leaders of the seafarers unions to exclude immigrant seamen from jobs on British ships. Many seamen drawn from overseas—Indian "lascars" as well as Chinese, Arab and other sailors—had been employed on British merchant ships during the war, when British crews were enlisted in the Royal Navy. With the demobilisation of the armed forces, the competition for jobs intensified. Prominent among the leaders of the anti-immigrant campaign in Glasgow was Manny Shinwell, who went on to become a Labour MP [Member of Parliament]. Effectively, the seafarers unions—including the National Sailors' and Firemen's Union, the British Seafarers' Union (of which Shinwell was Glasgow branch leader) and the National Union of Ships' Stewards, Cooks, Butchers and Bakers—excluded non-British sailors and in some cases campaigned for their deportation by the state. The chauvinist campaign by Labour leaders led to violent racist attacks on immigrant areas by enraged mobs in Glasgow, Cardiff, London, Liverpool, Tyneside and other port cities.

Shinwell's anti-immigrant tradition was revived in 2009 when strikes and protests on construction sites erupted under the slogan "British jobs for British workers" (later "local jobs for local workers"). These were fully supported by the Socialist Party, and given backhanded support by the Socialist Workers Party. The Spartacist League/Britain denounced these strikes as poison to the interests of the multiethnic working class, pointing to the necessity for "a fight for jobs for *all*, through a shorter workweek with no loss in pay, and to undertake a union organising drive," including low-paid immigrant workers ("Down With Chauvinist Campaign Against Foreign Workers!" *Workers Hammer* No 208, Autumn 2009 [reprinted from *WV* No. 939, 3 July 2009]).

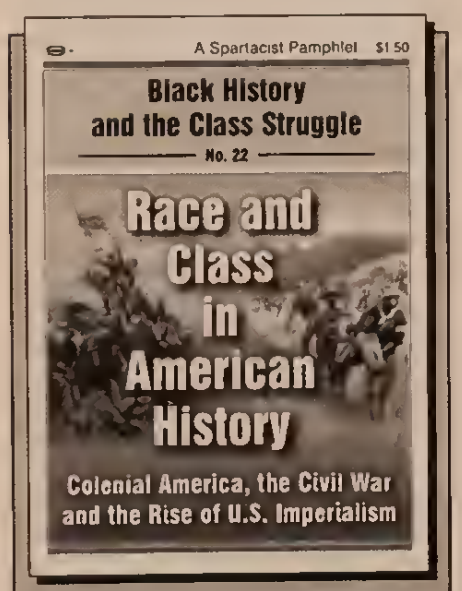
The newspaper that *did* publish McKay's protest against Lansbury's *Daily Herald* was Sylvia Pankhurst's *Workers' Dreadnought*. McKay later said that he could not have survived a year in London if not for the fact that he was an active communist. In a letter to Leon Trotsky in 1922, McKay recalled: "I was working at that time in London in a communist group. Our group provided the club of Negro soldiers with revolutionary newspapers and literature, which had nothing in common with the daily papers that are steeped in race prejudice." McKay was a supporter of the Workers Socialist Federation, led by Pankhurst, which was anti-racist and tried to attract to its ranks black soldiers who ended up in London after the war. Pankhurst was battle-hardened in the fight against chauvinism, having led the left wing of the women's suffrage movement before WWI. McKay himself wrote that Pankhurst "was always jabbing her hat pin into the hides of smug, slack labor leaders" (McKay, *A Long Way From Home*, published by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1970).

The strike wave of 1919 that swept the cities of Glasgow, London and Belfast was part of a post WWI wave of proletarian struggles throughout Europe. Workers of Glasgow's "Red Clydeside" mobilised behind the engineers, who struck for a 40-hour week. With workers battling police in the city streets, the government sent troops to Glasgow to restore order, but it was an open question whether the soldiers would have attacked the strikers, or sympathised with them. In the event the troops were not tested: the strike leaders were arrested and the engineering strikes were settled. However the threat remained of a major class confrontation between the government and the Triple Alliance—the unions representing miners, transport and rail workers. The treachery of the union misleaders was shown when Prime Minister Lloyd George called their bluff by pointing out that a joint strike by these three powerful unions would, in effect, pose the question of taking power. "Are you ready to take the power?" the prime minister cleverly asked these fakers. As miners leader Robert Smillie remarked, from that moment "we were beaten and we knew we were."

The Communist International urged the formation of a unified Communist party from among the best elements of the British far left. These included revolutionary syndicalists like John Maclean and Willie Gallacher who led heroic proletarian struggles during WWI. These struggles were waged not only in opposition to wartime restrictions and state repression but also in defiance of the right-wing Labour and trade-union leaders who opposed strikes as damaging to the "war effort." Yet the Communist Party of Great Britain that was founded in 1920 did not include the most militant, internationalist elements of the socialist movement. Thus it lacked a leadership core that was experienced in fighting the politics of the Labour Party and trade-union bureaucracy. The Labour Party cynically positioned itself to contain the revolutionary upsurge, not least by adopting a formal commitment to "socialism" which was enshrined in its constitution in 1918. Lenin wrote his 1920 pamphlet, *"Left-Wing" Communism—An Infantile Disorder* to help win over the left-wing leaders like Sylvia Pankhurst to an understanding of the need for tactics to win the mass of the working class away from Labour reformism.

As we observed in a seminal article on the origins of British Communism, the best revolutionary elements did not make the transition from syndicalism to Leninism, and the party that was founded in 1920 was ineffective in its strategic task of breaking workers from Labour reformism. The article noted:

> "This study of the British SLP [Socialist Labour Party] illuminates in one important, concrete case the historic problem of forging Communist parties in the West out of the subjectively revolutionary elements in the pre-1917 socialist and anarcho-syndicalist movements. It also adds appreciably to our understanding of why the Communist Party in Britain was stillborn. The sterility of the CPGB and absence of a real Leninist tradition in Britain have been key negative conditions for the complete hegemony of Labourite reformism over the workers movement right down to the present."
>
> —"British Communism Aborted," *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 36-37, Winter 1985-86 ■



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2012 California Ballot

Repeal Death Penalty? BT Votes No

Opposition to capital punishment has long been a tenet of the Marxist movement. In 1913, the famed Socialist Party spokesman Eugene V. Debs wrote that an Arizona measure to abolish the state's death penalty "should appeal to every just and humane person in the state. Capital punishment is simply a relic of barbarism. There is absolutely no justification for its survival in our present civilization." One can exclude from the "just and humane" the dubious Bolshevik Tendency (BT), which boasts of opposing a measure to do away with California's death penalty in last November's election.

Proposition 34 (the SAFE California Act), a ballot initiative calling to repeal the state's death penalty and replace it with life without parole, went down to defeat. The BT showed its mettle by announcing *two weeks later* that they opposed Prop. 34. Under the heading "Why Marxists Voted 'No'" the BT's article is a grotesque repudiation of the most elementary Marxist principle on the death penalty and the understanding of the capitalist state as an apparatus for the violent repression of the working class and oppressed.

As we wrote in support of Prop. 34 ("Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!" *WV* No. 1009, 28 September 2012):

> "As Marxists, we oppose the death penalty on principle—for the guilty as well as the innocent. We do not accord the state the right to determine who lives and who dies, and welcome any measure against the death penalty or curtailing the reach of the state's killing machine. While the measure is couched as a means of making the system of capitalist repression more effective and efficient, including by redirecting money to police departments, what is primary for us in calling for a 'yes' vote is that the SAFE Act is a referendum on state-sanctioned murder."

One need not be a Marxist to seek the abolition of capital punishment, a tradition that can be traced back to the Enlightenment of the 17th and 18th centuries. "The Other Death Penalty Project," an organization of prisoners sentenced to life without parole, succinctly put it: "We encourage a yes vote because any other vote would be in favor of state-sanctioned executions, but for that reason alone." Following the February 9 execution in India of Kashmir-born Muhammad Afzal for his alleged role in the 2001 attack on its parliament, the South Asia director for Human Rights Watch declared, "Human Rights Watch opposes the death penalty in all circumstances as an inherently irreversible, inhumane punishment."

Far to the right of the liberals, the BT did not just stand on the side of maintaining California's death penalty. They also rewrote history by glorifying the appeals that are purportedly the right of those condemned to death as "limited democratic rights won through past struggles." In reality, the mass struggles for civil rights led to a decade with no executions, beginning with a de facto moratorium in 1967. Five years later, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down all existing death penalty laws as "wanton," "freakish" and "arbitrary," directing states to draft new ones. To get around these objections, states rewrote their laws to include minimal restrictions on the imposition of the death penalty, aiming to give a "democratic" veneer to racist legal lynching. In 1976, the first of these laws was approved by the Supreme Court, opening the sluice gates for executions that have since taken over 1,300 lives.

Taking such trappings as good coin, the BT scoffs at our assertion that "death penalty appeals provide little more than a facade of 'due process'." Countering that "federal-level challenges from California have actually been upheld in 70 percent of the cases heard," they neglect to mention that only *three* of those challenges led to full exoneration and release from prison. For most, the remedy was limited to reversal of the penalty phase of their cases,

AP

Entrance to death row at California's San Quentin prison, 2004.

resulting at best in the same sentence of life in prison called for in Prop. 34!

The BT fawns over the appeals process for those convicted of capital crimes, falsely implying that the same procedures are not available to all others in prison. The only thing they cite that is actually unique to death row inmates is that California "presently pays qualified private attorneys to represent indigent death row prisoners in *habeas* proceedings." But the remuneration provided by the state for complicated and time-consuming death penalty appeals is so low that private lawyers almost never take the cases.

Contrary to the rosy picture of California "justice" painted by the BT, one story of the Kafkaesque maze of the death penalty appeals process was told in a statement by Darrell Lomax, who has been on San Quentin's death row for 16 years: "I have been in a long fight with the federal public defenders' office, which has tried to work with the attorney general's office to deny me my constitutional right to a new trial and has refused to assign me state *habeas* counsel, even though this is mandated by law in my appeals process.... There are over 300 people on death row in California who have been here for over 10 years, myself included, who have not yet received appointment of counsel" (*Socialist Worker*, 12 April 2012).

Lomax was among the 46 other death row prisoners in San Quentin who wrote in opposition to the SAFE Act, justly protesting that it would condemn them to the living death of prison and force them to work as slave labor in conditions worse than death row. We profoundly sympathize with these death row inmates who saw the SAFE Act as depriving them of the sole possibility of relief, no matter how remote, in the courts of American capitalism. As we wrote in our article last September on Prop. 34: "It is a profoundly searing indictment of this country's judicial system that some prisoners prefer a death sentence on the grounds that this provides some means to prove their innocence and avoid the worse day-to-day violence and torture in the maximum-security prison chambers."

In arguing to maintain California's death penalty as the slim thread to freedom for at best a scant few, the BT is content to shoot craps with other people's lives. This argument can only be premised on the lie that those sentenced to die in California will rarely be executed. As elsewhere, California's capitalist rulers will seek to empty their death row and reduce the expense of capital litigation either by eliminating the death penalty or eliminating the inmates.

Last year, the California Supreme Court ominously threatened attorneys who file repeat *habeas corpus* challenges to the death sentence. Reveling in a perceived mandate to get the state's killing machine back up and running after Prop. 34's defeat, the Los Angeles and San Mateo counties District Attorneys went to court demanding immediate execution warrants for three death row inmates. The forces of racist law and order who led the campaign against Prop. 34 are promising to put forward their own initiative in the 2014 elections to speed up the killing of the more than 700 death row prisoners in California. Unmentioned by the BT is that dead men have no appeals.

The BT despicably crows, "It is good that Proposition 34 failed—had it succeeded, it might have become a model for similar campaigns in other states." What states do they have in mind? Texas, where 28 were executed in the past two years? Or maybe Arizona, Oklahoma or Mississippi—runners up in the legal lynching sweepstakes? That the BT shows such contempt for the lives of the predominantly black and Latino denizens of death row is hardly a surprise to us. Since its inception over three decades ago, the BT has been marked by a particular disdain for the struggles of the oppressed—not least those of black people in the U.S. As just one recent example, this outfit stands out for not having published a protest against the racist vigilante killing of black youth Trayvon Martin that sparked outrage and demonstrations across the country last year.

The BT disingenuously invokes the case of class-war prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, an innocent man who spent 30 years on death row before his sentence was reduced to life in prison in 2011. Noting that Mumia's lead attorneys Leonard Weinglass and Daniel Williams sabotaged his post-conviction relief hearings in 1995-96 by refusing to introduce powerful evidence of his innocence, they go on to denounce the "Liberals who turned their backs on Mumia...because they shrank from drawing the obvious conclusions about American 'justice' exposed by his frame-up." This is rich coming from the BT. Their involvement in Mumia's defense was to conciliate the reformists who subordinated the demand for Mumia's freedom to the call for a "new trial," promoting illusions in the justice of the capitalist courts in order to appeal to these same liberals.

The BT statement on Prop. 34 devotes not a single word to fighting to mobilize the working class and its allies in struggle for the abolition of the racist death penalty. Instead, their maximum demand is for an "honest campaign which educates people about the racism and barbarity of the death penalty" as against the capitulation to the police and their supporters by those who drafted the SAFE Act.

Only those blinded by their own illusions in "law and order" liberals would have expected anything different from the SAFE Act's authors and main spokesmen. Among them were the former warden of San Quentin, who oversaw four executions during her tenure, and the Republican architects of California's 1978 "Death Penalty Act" as well as the ACLU. In opposition stood the statewide associations of cops, D.A.s and prison guards, which believe that only the most monstrous measures of repression can keep the working class and oppressed cowed in the face of intensifying exploitation and mounting misery. And that was the side taken by the so-called Bolshevik Tendency.

We are for the abolition of the death penalty for everyone, not just those who live long enough and are lucky enough to win the appeals lottery. Our program is rooted in the class struggle, seeking to mobilize the social power of the multiracial working class in opposition to the death penalty, life without parole, solitary confinement and all the other barbaric institutions of the capitalist state. Through such struggle our purpose is to win the working class to the understanding that the bourgeois state is not some "neutral" agency but rather exists to defend the class rule and profits of the capitalist class against those they exploit and oppress. To put an end to the grisly workings of capitalism's machinery of death—he they the executioners on death row or the cops gunning down black and minority youth on the inner-city streets—requires sweeping away this entire system and its state through proletarian socialist revolution. ■

WV Photo

Partisan Defense Committee contingent at Philadelphia demonstration for death-row prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, April 2008.

Gun Control British-Style

The following commentary was submitted by a comrade of the Spartacist League/Britain.

Advocates of gun control in the U.S. frequently cite Britain as a model. The truth of the matter was noted in the article "Bourgeois Hypocrisy and Gun Control Schemes" (*WV* No. 1015, 11 January) upholding the right to bear arms: "Whereas in U.S. cities the cops round up black and Latino youth on the pretext of drug and/or gun possession, in Britain the cops sweep up black and Asian youth for drugs and/or knives. In both cases, the cops brutalize and kill with impunity."

One of the main lessons to be drawn from Britain's strict gun control is that the capitalist rulers will seize on public outrage over horrendous killings by crazed gunmen to impose further restrictions on the right of citizens to arm themselves for self-defense. Britain's ban on assault weapons was introduced following a 1987 shooting spree in Hungerford, England, in which a lone gunman killed 16 people. Following this atrocity, semiautomatic rifles were banned and shotguns were restricted. Far more drastic was the legislation introduced in the wake of a brutal mass shooting strikingly similar to the recent one in Connecticut: in 1996 in Dunblane, Scotland, a gunman shot and killed 16 young children and their teacher. The following year, Tony Blair's Labour government banned handguns almost entirely and boasted of having some of the toughest gun laws in the world.

Support for gun control accepts the fallacy that citizens exercising their right to bear arms represent a danger to society while reinforcing illusions in the police, who are a real and present danger to the working class and minorities. In Britain, while the public has been increasingly disarmed the repressive powers of the state have been increased. The commonly accepted image in the U.S. of British cops is that of the "unarmed bobby." Reality paints a different picture. Elite armed police units have demonstrated their firepower. A case in point was the cold-blooded police execution of Jean Charles de Menezes—a Brazilian immigrant and electrician who had been deemed a "terrorism" suspect—in a London Tube (subway) train in 2005. As well, under the pretext of the "war on terror," armed police units conduct raids on Asian homes.

Getty

London, August 2011: Over 1,000 were arrested during riots sparked by racist cop killing of young black man in Tottenham district.

"Anti-gun" campaigns are in fact a license to kill, and to kill black people in particular. Mark Duggan, a young black man, was blown away by the cops in London's Tottenham district in 2011, a racist outrage that led to riots in England's major cities. The riots in turn were met with further rounds of state repression, including "anti-weapons" sweeps in minority neighborhoods. By American standards, the weapons seized were laughable. The arms found in one such raid included "two archaic flintlock pistols, retrofitted flare guns and a Jesse James-style revolver," as Anthony Faiola reported in the *Washington Post* (1 February). He noted that the cache "might be better suited to 'Antiques Roadshow' than inner-city ganglands."

The primary point of "anti-weapons" sweeps is to assert the state's right to a monopoly on violence in society. In Britain, where firearms are increasingly difficult for the public to obtain (while criminals of course can get guns), prosecutors and cops are now beating the drums about "knife violence." Carrying knives in public in England and Wales today brings mandatory prison sentences, and just being in the company of someone armed with a blade can lead to serious charges. This campaign has been further bolstered by "anti-terror" legislation giving a blank check to the cops to stop and search. In Scotland, justice secretary Kenny MacAskill recently bragged of "a record number of stop and searches" and how "being caught with a knife could now land you a five year prison sentence" (*BBC News*, 26 November 2012). And after knives it will no doubt be hatchets or longbows.

Britain's draconian anti-firearms measures date from the efforts of the ruling class to disarm the population in the aftermath of the October Revolution of 1917 in Russia amid tumultuous working-class unrest at home. The background to the Firearms Act (1920) was aptly described by Joyce Lee Malcolm, author of the book *To Keep and Bear Arms: The Origins of an Anglo-American Right*. In an article "Gun Control in England: The Tarnished Gold Standard" (saf.org), Malcolm observed: "It was fear of revolution, not crime, that resulted in the first serious gun controls. In 1920 the government faced massive labor disruption, feared a Bolshevik revolution, and worried about the return of thousands of soldiers traumatized by an especially brutal war." Actually, it was hundreds of thousands.

In Britain, the right of the citizens to bear arms was upheld by the Chartists, which arose as the first mass independent workers movement in the first half of the 19th century. The powerful left wing of the Chartists was republican, internationalist and revolutionary-minded. They asserted their right to arms and bitterly opposed the new, semi-military professional police in working-class districts across the country. Chartism was defeated and demoralized in the aftermath of the failure of the Europe-wide 1848 revolutions and the ensuing political reaction. Later came the rise of the Labour Party, which since its founding in 1900 has worked to tie the working class to the bourgeois order.

In the U.S., the Second Amendment was never about hunting or target practice but about the need for a popular militia to ward off the threat of tyranny. Today this means the right to own assault rifles and other military-grade firearms. It is the task of Marxists to unearth the revolutionary principle of the right to bear arms from underneath a mountain of liberal myths, which stem from upholding the sanctity of the capitalist state. ■

Freedom Now for Tinley Park 5!

Chicago

On January 4, a Cook County court sentenced five anti-racist militants to prison terms of three and a half to six years on "armed violence" charges that stem from the breaking up of a fascist meeting last spring. Plans to convene a "White Nationalist Economic Summit" attracted a group of the scum, some with links to the Stormfront Web site run by a former Ku Klux Klan grand dragon, to the Ashford House restaurant in the Chicago suburb of Tinley Park on May 19. Having gotten wind of this outrage, at least 18 anti-racists went to the restaurant and put an end to the "summit," sending some of the creeps to the hospital. Shortly after, police pulled over and arrested a carload of five anti-fascists from Bloomington, Indiana—Jason Sutherlin, Cody Lee Sutherlin, Dylan Sutherlin, Alex Stuck and John Tucker—who have come to be known as the Tinley Park 5. The trouncing of the "white nationalists" was a courageous act in the interest of the working class and all the fascists' intended victims. ***Free the Tinley Park 5!***

Each of the five was initially charged with 37 felony counts, including armed violence, property damage and mob action, with bond set at $175,000 to $250,000 apiece. The cops and prosecutors applied continuous pressure to force them to give up names of those involved in sending the fascists scattering, which the five have steadfastly refused to do. Unable to meet the exorbitant bonds, they spent seven months in Cook County Jail while legal proceedings dragged on. Facing the prospect of up to another year behind bars to go to a trial whose outcome they could not predict, the five accepted a non-cooperating plea bargain in which each pled guilty to three counts of armed violence in return for guarantees of time off for good behavior.

The witchhunt against the Tinley Park 5 was part and parcel of the hysteria whipped up against protesters at the NATO summit taking place that same May 19-20 weekend in downtown Chicago. With the city center turned into an armed camp, politicians, cops and the local media vilified and violence-baited the anti-NATO protesters, particularly anarchists and those participating in Black Bloc actions. Three anti-NATO protesters are still in jail after being set up by a police provocateur and charged under Illinois anti-terrorism statutes, the first time these laws were ever used (see "Defend Anti-NATO Protesters!" *WV* No. 1003, 25 May 2012).

It is a good thing that the fascist "summit" was dispersed and the Hitler-loving vermin were sent scurrying. The fascists are not simply carriers of a genocidal worldview but deal in race terror against black people, Jews, immigrants, gays and anyone else they perceive as "impure." Last August, a neo-Nazi skinhead murdered six Sikhs at a temple in Wisconsin, and in July 2011 a fascist massacred 69 people at a social-democratic youth camp in Norway. In 1999, a disciple of fascist Matthew Hale went on a racist shooting rampage in Illinois and Indiana, killing a black former Northwestern University basketball coach and a Korean student and wounding nine others, including six orthodox Jews. In 2007, another Hale follower torched a black family's home in Joliet.

The fascists pose a deadly threat to the entire labor movement and left. The capitalist rulers hold these shock troops in reserve so that in times of crisis and social struggle they can be unleashed to defend the bourgeois order. Take the example of Greece, where the fascist marauders of Golden Dawn are today carrying out daily attacks on immigrants and leftists in collusion with the capitalist cops and courts.

As Trotskyists, we look to the organized power of the working class, standing at the head of all those targeted by the fascists, as the force that can drive this scum off the streets. We have initiated labor/black mobilizations to stop Klan provocations, including one in Springfield, Illinois, in 1994. Such mobilizations are important in helping to make the working class conscious of its historic interest and potential social power as the gravedigger of the decaying capitalist system that breeds fascism.

The Partisan Defense Committee, a legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League, has donated $100 to the defense fund for the Tinley Park 5 and their families. Donations can be made at www.wepay.com/donations/legal-defense-fund-for-the-tinley-park-five. ■

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Young Spartacus

Canadian Government's War on Science, Native Peoples

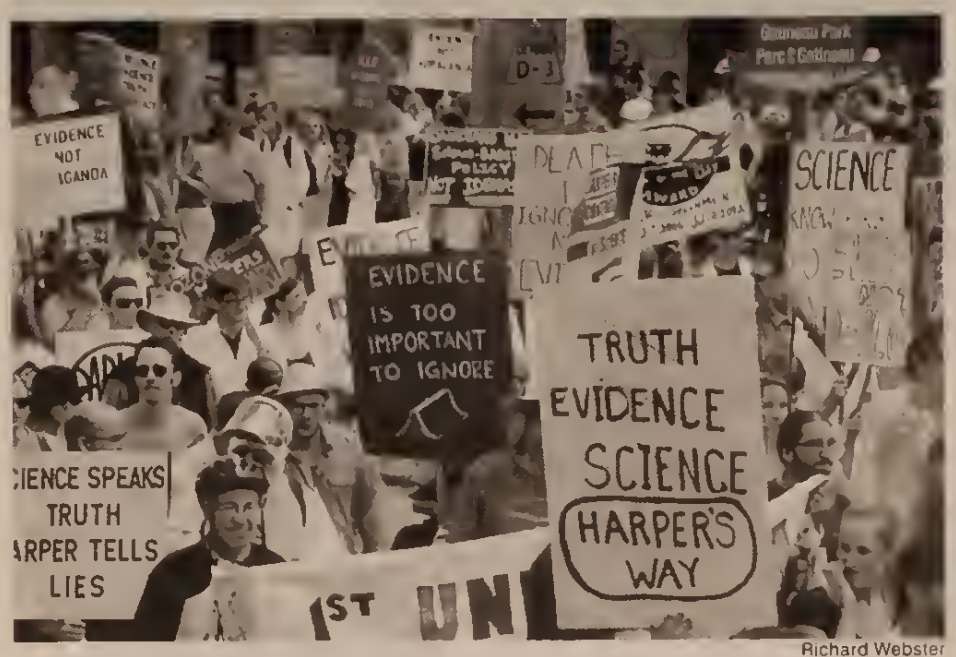
We reprint below a presentation given by comrade Nevin Morrison of the Trotskyist League of Canada/Ligue Trotskyste du Canada at a 20 September 2012 Spartacus Youth Club class in Vancouver. It was originally published in Spartacist Canada *No. 175 (Winter 2012/2013).*

SPARTACIST CANADA

This class has been billed as a talk about Marxism versus religion, but more broadly I want to deal with Marxism and science, so I'll start by talking about some of the current attacks on science and scientific research. In Canada, these have recently targetted climate science, as the government campaigns to make Canada an "energy superpower," including through massive polluting and trampling on the rights of Native peoples. Our approach to these questions is based on what Marxists call *dialectical materialism*, as opposed to the *idealism* of religion and of other political viewpoints. This may seem abstract, but we'll see that in fact it is key to understanding how Marxism addresses the injustice and oppression that permeate capitalist society.

So far, [Prime Minister Stephen] Harper's Conservatives have tried to be discreet about their ties to various religious, anti-science nuts in order to not scare off moderate votes. This party is riddled with Christian fundamentalists who need to be kept on a short leash to avoid embarrassing comments on abortion, homosexuality, evolution, other religious and ethnic groups, and who knows what else. But the religious right has reason to feel they have their guy in power.

One of Harper's first acts was to axe even the inadequate national childcare program negotiated by the previous government, forcing more women to stay at home or leave their children with relatives. Harper has cut funding to numerous social services impacting women, and the Tories' "foreign aid" plan for maternal health in underdeveloped countries denies funding for abortion, something reminiscent of George Bush's cutting of condom distribution under USAID. Most recently, in an attempt to open the door to new attacks on abortion rights, Conservative MP [Member of Parliament] Stephen Woodworth put forward a motion in parliament aimed at "reviewing" the definition of when human life begins.



Richard Webster

Canadian Press

Above: Scientists protest government cuts to research at "Death of Evidence" rally on Parliament Hill, Ottawa, July 2012. Below: Native people protest Northern Gateway pipeline project, Calgary, May 2011.

The oil companies have to be pretty happy with Harper too, after he backed out of Canada's commitment to the Kyoto Protocol which, while of dubious benefit to the environment, could have seriously reduced the competitiveness of Alberta's massive oil sands developments with their staggering carbon emissions. The government has sought to push forward massive pipeline projects, especially Enbridge's Northern Gateway, through shortcutting the review process for new developments. The Harper Tories have also attempted to steamroll opposition—mainly that of environmentalists and Native peoples, though frankly at least in B.C. [British Columbia] the pipelines aren't very popular with anyone—by tarring them as foreign-funded radicals. The government has committed extra cash to auditing environmental charities to discourage political activity, while they've had the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] spying on the Yinka Dene Alliance, a coalition of B.C. Natives opposing the pipelines.

Harper & Co. have further sought to undercut opposition by muzzling government scientists and dismantling government-funded research that has helped to establish the reality of global warming and continues to monitor carbon emissions. This July more than 1,000 scientists and supporters held a protest on Parliament Hill, exposing cuts to basic research with a mock funeral for the "death of evidence." Targets for government cuts have also included programs that don't fit with the Conservative social agenda, such as Vancouver's Insite safe injection site [which provides legal injection booths and health services for drug users], despite extensive research proving its benefits. At the same time, the Tories have abolished the long-form census, which provided demographic data to support various social programs, replacing it with a voluntary survey which statisticians warn will not provide representative data.

The broader context for all this reactionary, anti-scientific nonsense here and elsewhere is the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s. For more than seven decades, despite the bureaucratic degeneration that came with the rise of Stalinism, the Soviet workers state stood as a living testament to the possibility of humanity taking control of its fate, free from the pernicious oversight of any God or religious authorities. Since its destruction, religious backwardness and superstition have been on the rise not just in the former Soviet Union but internationally. In the United States, for example, a recent survey found that 51 percent of adults believe God created humans in their present form within the last 10,000 years. In Canada it's 22 percent, which is bad enough!

Marxism and Religion

Where did religion come from? Many millennia ago, as hunters and gatherers at the mercy of the forces of nature, we needed a system of explanations for natural occurrences. We came up with mysticism and religion to explain the world, give the individual a role in it and provide consolation. While it may still make some people feel better, mystical explanations are no longer needed for natural phenomena. Indeed, compared to modern science, religion has no more explanatory power than theories of UFOs and space aliens. We would do well today to emulate the French mathematician and scientist Laplace who, asked by Napoleon why he left out any mention of God from his book on celestial physics, proudly answered, "I had no need of this hypothesis."

With the rise of class-divided society, religion took on the additional role of propping up the ruling class. It promoted the "divine right" of kings and consoled peasants and workers about their miserable struggle for existence by promising a better life in the next world—"pie in the sky when you die." As the revolutionary leader V.I. Lenin observed, "impotence of the exploited classes in their struggle against the exploiters just as inevitably gives rise to the belief in a better life after death as impotence of the savage in his battle with nature gives rise to belief in gods, devils, miracles, and the like" ("Socialism and Religion," 1905).

With the Protestant Reformation of the 1500s and 1600s and the Enlightenment in the century that followed, the domain of religion was trimmed back quite a bit in the interests of the emerging class of merchants and capitalists, the *bourgeoisie*. As a prop to the aristocracy and as the world's largest landlord, the Catholic church got in the way of bourgeois aspirations, and natural science became a weapon for the bourgeoisie in this struggle.

The rationalist, scientific ideology of the Enlightenment challenged all existing authority and suited the purposes

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CCNY, NAC Room 1/211
138th St. and Amsterdam Ave.

Information and readings:
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CHICAGO

Wednesday, March 6, 7 p.m.

Russia, 1917: How the Working Class Took Power

University of Chicago, Reynolds Club
5706 South University

Information and readings:
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TORONTO

Wednesday, March 13, 6:30 p.m.

For Free Abortion on Demand!

Women's Oppression and Revolutionary Marxism

University of Toronto
Sidney Smith Hall, Room 2115
100 St. George Street

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of the rising bourgeoisie in its struggle against the old regime. Of course, more than ideology was needed to overthrow the kings and priests. It took bourgeois-democratic revolutions in countries such as England and France to clear the road for the development of the capitalist system. The emergence of industry in turn demanded the further advancement of science, which to this day serves the bourgeoisie by increasing efficiency of production and discovering new ways of exploiting natural resources, not to mention people.

The parts of the world that had not undergone this modernization were sooner or later overrun by the ones that did. With the rise of imperialist capitalism, America, Japan and a handful of European countries came to exploit and hold back the development of entire continents, where many elements of pre-capitalist traditions and religious obscurantism continue today. This can he seen particularly in the oppression of women through the veil, dowry, "honour killings" and so on. Many of our opponents, even those claiming to be Marxist such as the International Socialists, falsely invoke "anti-imperialism" to embrace Islam in an opportunist adaptation to retrograde, non-working-class forces. We genuine Marxists oppose all religion as, in Karl Marx's words, "the opium of the people," and look to the example of the Bolsheviks who, in making the Russian Revolution, worked to win women in particular and workers and peasants in general away from religion to a liberating and scientific worldview.

Armed with socialist ideas and a scientific outlook, the class-conscious, urban working class will be ahle to throw aside religious prejudices and prescriptions and struggle for a better life here on earth. As Marxists, we fight for the separation of church and state—a basic, though unfortunately always partial, gain of the revolutions which formed modern capitalism. You can see its partial nature, for example, in the existence of a government-funded Catholic school system in many parts of Canada. We fight for universal, free, *secular* education.

We consider religion to be a private matter in relation to the state. No one should receive any special privileges or punishment for their religious heliefs or lack thereof. The state should not interfere in religious matters, just as the church should stay out of civil affairs. Marriage and divorce, for example, should be simple civil matters.

To break the hold of religion, the conditions must be created to replace it. The masses must be educated in historical materialism, the workings of nature and society, and the role of religion. But the issue can only be fundamentally addressed once the working class has swept away the capitalist profit system. We can look to the example of the Bolsheviks in Russia after the workers revolution of 1917, when they sought to undermine religion through education campaigns while weakening the church through the complete separation of church and state. Institutions like education and marriage were removed from the clutches of the priests and church property was appropriated for social use. It was necessary to deal with the higher clergy who openly supported the White Army in trying to overthrow the workers government in the Civil War. But the Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky did not outlaw religion, which would only have created martyrs and driven more backward layers of the population into the arms of the priests.

Marxism and Science

Why does the working class need science? In one sense, for the same reasons the capitalists do. Socialism will never he built on the basis of primitive technology at a lower level than capitalism. To provide for the needs of all, it must he more efficient than capitalism. The overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of a state-owned economy, key prerequisites for socialism, are powerful tools to this end. Witness even the highly bureaucratic Chinese workers state, which has greatly outperformed the capitalist world in economic growth. But the only road to the all-round economic and social advance for all of humanity lies through world socialist revolution. An international socialist economy would require far greater energy production than capitalism just to begin modernizing the Third World, where billions live in desperate poverty. As Lenin angularly put it, communism is soviet power plus electrification.

Marxism itself is a methodology of social science—a means to understand society and history, as well as to act on it. It is based on dialectical materialism. As one of the readings for this class explained, materialism recognizes "that the world exists in reality; it was not created within the realm of the human mind." And dialectics signifies "that the essence of our world (indeed our universe) is matter in motion. All things exist not in stasis but in a process of development. An analogy is the difference between a still photograph and a motion picture" ("In Defense of Marxism and Science," *Workers Vanguard* No. 971, 7 January 2011).

This may seem rather obvious—that the world exists and changes—but from birth we are led to accept that the social structures and norms in this class-divided society are basically static: some people own the factories and others work in them, some rule and others are ruled, by right, sometimes with God brought in to bless the whole arrangement. With dialectical materialism, as Friedrich Engels explained, "a method [was] found of explaining man's 'knowing' by his 'being,' instead of, as herctolore, his 'being' by his 'knowing'" (*Anti-Dühring*, 1878). This allows us to find the source of the world's injustice and oppression not in bad ideas or a few bad people, but in tbe economic relations and the political system that has grown out of those relations.

Origins of Our Species and Society

Marx considered Charles Darwin's theory of evolution essential to a materialist view of the world. After reading Darwin's work, he wrote that it "is most important and suits my purpose in that it provides a hasis in natural science for the historical class struggle" ("Marx to Ferdinand Lassalle," 16 January 1861). Darwin's theory was the key to understanding not only the origin of species and our species in particular, hut also the rise of civilizations. In his excellent short essay entitled "The Part Played by Lahour in the Transition from Ape to Man," Engels argues that, contrary to the views of his day, the development of the human hrain was driven by tool use and the development of speech was driven by social labour, i.e., the need to work together.

The Soviet psychologist Lev Vygotsky extended this aspect of Engels' work in the 1920s and '30s with experiments demonstraring the centrality of tool use to learning and showing that language in particular is socially constructed. Evolution creates the capacity for individual development, as in other species, and a high degree of flexibility. From that starting point, the human mind and even the physical brain are shaped largely by social processes occurring after birth. Scientists elsewhere have begun to catch up in recent decades with evidence of neuroplasticity in children, the shaping of the brain itself by learning. As Marx observed, "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness" (*A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, 1859).

The capitalist ruling class and its ideologues have taken every opportunity to divide workers and the oppressed with claims for the supposed genetic or biological superiority of one race, colour or gender over another, thereby sabotaging prospects for uniting against their rule. See, for example, the pseudo-scientific studies of Philippe Rushton and of Richard Herrnstein and Cbarles Murray. In fact, the categories of race and gender are constructs of class society that are implanted in us from the culture that surrounds us. While some differences in abilities may exist in early childhood (such as a differential in spatial relations versus language skills between genders), humans are much more the same than they are different. Racist, anti-woman pseudo-science exists for the purposes of a capitalist class that reviles racial and ethnic minorities and fosters chauvinism in order to divide the working class.

In a later work, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1884), Engels goes on to analyze the rise of civilization. In hrief, he argues that the development of agriculture from the previous hunter-gatherer societies created a surplus product heyond what was needed for subsistence, thus freeing part of the population for other pursuits. The question is then posed, who gets the surplus? From that point on, the history of all societies becomes, as Marx and Engels famously declared in the *Communist Manifesto*, the history of class struggles. Throughout history, slaves have fought with their masters, serfs with their lords, workers with their bosses, to decide who will get that surplus. Institutions of force—ultimately the state—were created to shore up the ruling class. At the same time, the family, which subordinates women to men, developed to ensure the inheritance of private property.

As the mode of production has cbanged from hunting and gathering to slavery, feudalism and ultimately capitalism, wars and revolutions have brought corresponding changes in the ruling class and its state. The product of all of this development has been a world capitalist system based on nation states, which grew explosively to exploit markets and resources around the globe, and has since begun to stagnate and decay.

Marxism and Environmentalism

It is a common misconception that capitalism is synonymous with consumerism and the limitless expansion of wealth through technology. Also common, especially among environmentalists, is the view that the problem with capitalism is an unsustainable "First World lifestyle" of big cars, big houses and the like; thus,

continued on page 8

Beard

Karl Marx

Dietz Verlag Berlin

Friedrich Engels

"To abolish religion as the *illusory* happiness of the people is to demand their *real* happiness. The demand to give up illusions about the existing state of affairs is the ***demand to give up a state of affairs which needs illusions***."

—Karl Marx, "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law: Introduction" (1843-44)

Editorial Note

FRSO: Curiouser and Curiouser

Readers of *Young Spartacus* may recall our article "Freedom Road Socialist Organization: Democrats' Loyal Maoists" (*WV* No. 1004, 8 June 2012), in which we nailed the New York-based FRSO for, among other things, its outright support to Obama in the 2008 elections. That article inspired some spirited cyberspace exchanges between FRSO boncho Eric Odell and various others, not including ourselves. Odell "clarified" in a 14 June 2012 posting that: "I don't think it's correct to say that the FRSO 'in the main' supported Obama. I think the majority of individuals on the National Executive Committee at the time did, but within the organization as a whole people were all over the place on the question." So, "just" the leadership (Odell was on the NEC as of June 2012) and the press of the FRSO, then, called for the election of Obama as the imperialist Commander-in-Chief. In fact, the FRSO was so pleased with Obama's win that it counseled its readers to: "Savor the Victory, Get Right to Work" (freedomroad.org, 11 November 2008).

Publicly, the FRSO never responded to our polemic, and we frankly never expected them to. But recently, while a member of our *YSp* editorial team was wading through the FRSO's Web site in search of coverage of the 2012 elections, she was struck by the lack of it. (We did notice that their former comrades of the Midwest-based FRSO/*Fight Back!* remained consistent in their support to Obama, urging "It is better to vote against Romney, especially in swing states" [fightbacknews.org, 12 August 2012].)

With no line article, how could the masses (or the FRSO membership) know what to do on election day? Why did the FRSO go from its 2008 hailing of "Obama's Americanism" as a "more favorable terrain for the struggles of the working class and the oppressed" to...no line in 2012? Will the FRSO enlighten us? Inquiring minds want to know. ■

Science...

(continued from page 7)

they typically advocate the education of consumers to want less. The fact is that for countless millions of workers and oppressed people, the "First World lifestyle" is simply poverty. And why should anyone be against the best possible living standards for all? The capitalist system, despite all its triumphant rhetoric about "progress," is actually a brake on development because the profit motive inherently condemns production to chaos.

Environmentalism can only take society backwards. Unable to look beyond the capitalist framework, its promoters are left with only liberal, idealist and even reactionary answers like corporate social responsibility and lowering the aspirations of the Third World masses, i.e., reinforcing their oppression. The more radical environmentalists glorify Native American and other hunter-gatherer and early agricultural societies as supposedly a sustainable alternative to industrialization and capitalism. Some even advocate a reversion to pre-industrial "labour-intensive technologies" to provide jobs and supposedly reduce resource consumption. The hunter-gatherer is romanticized as living close to nature, understanding it and acting to preserve it.

Of course, hunter-gatherers did live close to nature—and suffered from hunger and short lifespans. Moreover, such societies were perfectly capable of causing deforestation, soil erosion, animal extinctions and all-round misuse of resources. Lower population densities made such behaviour perhaps more viable than it is today. At modern levels of population densities, we need centralized economic planning, scientific knowledge and the most advanced industrial and agricultural techniques to ensure the well-being of our species.

What limitations exist to the future expansion of material production, and the concrete nature of such limits, cannot be accurately judged within the framework of the capitalist system. We do know that even current technology is more than adequate to provide food and shelter for everyone. Yet, as famine plagues many countries, farmers are still paid not to grow food because higher prices mean higher profits. The environmental preoccupation with "consumerism" notwithstanding, the major problems of capitalism are not overproduction and overconsumption but rather *under*production and *under*consumption. We need to produce more to meet human needs, but capitalism will only produce for those who can afford to pay for it.

To look at the capitalists' squandering of natural resources and degradation of the environment in the interests of profit, one could easily conclude—as most ecologists do—that advanced industrial technology is inherently destructive. But technological considerations do not exist apart from class society. The organization of industrial production under capitalism necessarily leads to the degradation of the environment because the capitalist firms are motivated solely by maximizing profits. It's not that corporate presidents and CEOs are necessarily malicious people who hate clean air and water. Their job, though, is to make money for their owners and shareholders—that's what businesses are for. Cleaning up pollution and minimizing waste does not increase profits. This is the logic of capitalism at its most basic.

CBC

Native people live in abject poverty on overcrowded reserve in Pikangikum, northwestern Ontario.

The Northern Gateway pipeline project is a prime example of how this capitalist drive for profit goes up against the interests and needs of workers and the oppressed. It only shows the irrationality of capitalism that such an inefficient and expensive energy source as the oil sands is made viable by monopolistic restrictions on supply inflating prices. The route, which has been chosen to save money, winds through extremely inhospitable terrain to a port which can be accessed only through narrow shipping channels subject to major storms, even though safer—but more expensive—routes are possible. Along with the environmental risk comes the contempt for the life and safety of workers that is the norm in capitalist industry, as the BP Gulf of Mexico disaster of 2010 showed once again.

Capitalist corporations are more than willing to take such risks for the payoff of billions of dollars in profits in their pockets. For the rest of us, the payoff from this pipeline is not so attractive: only a handful of permanent new jobs, higher gas prices and a tiny share to Native groups with claims on territory along the pipeline route. This project is not a dirty and dangerous exception to the norm of the capitalist market, as many of its opponents would claim, but goes to the *modus operandi* of the capitalist system: production for profit. Capitalists only respond to human needs, protect against pollution and so on where these happen to coincide with the drive for profit.

Anatoly Skurikhin

Magnitogorsk iron and steel complex, USSR, 1932. Emerging out of deep backwardness, Soviet Union became industrial powerhouse despite Stalinist misrule.

And capitalism definitely cannot guarantee Native rights. As we note in our *Programmatic Theses*,

> "The Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste demands that whatever residual rights Native peoples have been able to maintain, whether through treaty agreements or otherwise, be respected. In some cases, treaty rights and land claims run up against socially useful developments like railways, hydroelectric projects and oil pipelines. The aboriginal peoples should receive generous compensation for any deprivation of land or disruption of activity, based on completely consensual agreement. Only a workers government will guarantee these conditions."
>
> —"Who We Are, and What We Fight For" (1998)

Pipelines are indeed necessary to transport fuel. In this case, however, we solidarize with the Native peoples of the area, who are vehemently opposed to the Northern Gateway project and rightly maintain that such a development must be negotiated, not imposed. We are also not indifferent to its other deleterious effects. As Marxists, our opposition of course differs from that of the environmentalists, who are skeptical at best toward any oil-related projects. We also condemn the China-bashing of many opponents of the pipeline, for instance John Bennet, the Executive Director of the Sierra Club Canada, who rants about "oil for the Chinese" and demands an "Energy Plan for Canadians" (rabble.ca, 25 July). For its part, the Yinka Dene Alliance, whose outlook differs vastly from both the Beijing Stalinists' and our own, captured the hypocrisy of the bourgeois outcry over "human rights" abuses in China by issuing a letter to President Hu Jintao in February that called on him to chastise Canadian rulers for their brutal oppression of Natives.

The Need for Workers Revolution

So what does a Marxist alternative offer? Certainly not a decrease in technology or production, but a total transformation in the use to which it is put. The key is production for social use rather than private profit—much of the world's population does not have their basic needs met, not from any scarcity of materials or labour, but because they don't have the money to pay. An increase in the application of the science we have and the development of new technology will liberate our productive capacity and eliminate economic scarcity, laying the basis for the disappearance of classes and the withering away of the state. Such a qualitative development of the world's productive forces for the benefit of all can only be achieved in an internationally planned, socialist economy.

The qualitative superiority of a collectivized, planned economy over capitalist anarchy was demonstrated in practice by the historical experience of the Soviet Union. Even given the tremendous bureaucratic distortions due to the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy, the USSR was able to construct an advanced industrial economy almost from the ground up. And they did it twice—after the Civil War of 1918-20 and again after the massive destruction of World War II. What made this possible was the 1917 Russian Revolution, which took the factories and other means of production out of the hands of the capitalist class.

The Russian Revolution demonstrated in practice the ability of the working class to take state power and construct a modern industrial society in which workers had access to medicine, science, education and culture. As one example of such accomplishments, the Soviet Union instituted a system of polytechnical education to allow students to receive not just training in a trade, which you might get if you are lucky in a capitalist country, but a well-rounded academic and technical education. Such an approach, on the basis of the higher industrial productivity of an international socialist society compared to capitalism, can begin to overcome the division between manual and intellectual labour, agricultural and industrial labour. As Friedrich Engels put it, "productive labour, instead of being a means of subjugating men, will become a means of their emancipation, by offering each individual the opportunity to develop all his faculties, physical and mental, in all directions and exercise them to the full—in which, therefore, productive labour will become a pleasure instead of being a burden" (*Anti-Dühring*).

The revolutionary Marxist solution to degradation of the environment has as its necessary precondition workers socialist revolutions in the advanced capitalist countries of North America, West Europe and Japan. To the contrary, the environmentalist framework accepts the inviolability of capitalist class rule, with production driven by profit and wealth monopolized by a tiny bourgeois ruling class. The solutions environmentalism offers are either reactionary, back-

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Witchhunt...

(continued from page 12)

Report" based on allegations of anti-Semitism. These accusations were pushed mainly by the university-sponsored Jewish Student Task Force led by the chief education chair for the Anti-Defamation League (ADL). The ADL has worked as an unofficial adjunct to the FBI and other state agencies for more than 50 years in a slew of anti-communist and other reactionary causes, providing extensive information to the FBI as well as to apartheid South Africa and Latin American death squad regimes (see "Zionist Fingermen for Apartheid, Salvador Death Squads: ADL's Massive Spying Operation," *WV* No. 577, 4 June 1993).

The Zionists and the UC administration share common interests in support of the U.S. alliance with Israel (which has long served the imperialists' strategic interests in the Near East) and in support of the so-called "war on terror." Begun under Bush and continued under Obama, the "war on terror" is used to justify colonial wars abroad and domestic repression at home. When the Zionists slander these SJP and MSA demonstrators as "pro-terrorist" and aligned with and funneling money to Hamas, as they have in the *Felber* suit, they are attempting to bring down on these students the whole weight of the capitalist state—which has used the label of "material support to terrorism" to justify imprisonment, torture, disappearance to a military brig, or even drone assassinations of citizens and foreign nationals.

Reuters

Gaza, November 2012: Palestinians gather around site of house destroyed in Israeli air raids.

The universities have never been the "ivory towers" of intellectual freedom they claim to be. Rather they are capitalist institutions whose functions include developing new techniques of production in order to maximize profit, as well as training bosses, managers, bourgeois ideologues and also socially useful technicians and specialists. University administrations serve as the representatives of the bourgeoisie, defending its class interests. Thus the UC administration is only doing its job when it acts on the Zionists' complaints in order to intimidate into silence those who speak out against the Israeli state or its U.S. imperialist backers. Pro-Palestinian activists must not fool themselves into relying on university officials for protection against Zionist provocations. *Abolish the administration, for student/worker/teacher control of the universities!*

UC President Mark Yudof actively worked to craft H.R. 35. According to the 3 December 2012 letter to Yudof written by the Center for Constitutional Rights and others protesting H.R. 35, the UC president was in contact with state assemblywoman Linda Halderman, encouraged the introduction of the bill after having reviewed a draft, and proposed changes including language that urges UC administrators to actively condemn so-called "anti-Semitic activity." H.R. 35 grotesquely equates actual incidents of anti-Semitism (such as swastikas and anti-Semitic graffiti on Hillel Houses and elsewhere on campuses) with political protest against atrocities of the Israeli state. The bill falsely accuses these activists of the "suppression and disruption of free speech that present Israel's point of view."

For years many reformists and liberals have called for bans on "hate speech" in response to racist provocations. We oppose liberal calls for laws and bans to suppress racist ideology. Such calls logically lead to appeals to the university administration and/or the bourgeois state to regulate what people can and cannot say. H.R. 35 is an example of how "hate speech" bills strengthen the powers of the state and administration to further their attacks against leftists and perceived opponents of the capitalists' interests. An NYC law from 1845 against wearing masks, which was upheld in a 2004 appeals court ruling against the KKK, served as the legal basis on which masked Occupy Wall Street protesters were arrested in September 2011.

AFP

Lebanon, 1982: Massacre of Palestinians carried out by fascistic Christian militias organized by Israeli forces at Sabra and Shatila refugee camps.

BDS: An Obstacle to Palestinian Liberation

The political positions cited by H.R. 35 as "actions that could create a hostile anti-Semitic environment" and from which students must be "protected" include "student- and faculty-sponsored boycott, divestment, and sanction campaigns against Israel that are a means of demonizing Israel and seek to harm the Jewish state." We staunchly defend proponents of BDS against any attempt to censor, ban or persecute them for their political positions.

We oppose all U.S. aid to Israel and we uphold the right of return for Palestinian refugees. But we do not agree with the BDS campaign, which appeals to the U.S. imperialists—the most blood-drenched ruling class on the planet—to act on behalf of the Palestinians through trade and other sanctions against Israel. Furthermore, the BDS campaign invokes the United Nations as an ally against the Zionist rulers. The UN presided over the 1947 partition of Palestine, and its "peacekeepers" disarmed Palestinian fighters in Lebanon in 1982, thereby setting up the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps for the massacre that followed. Looking to the "good will" of the U.S. or the UN is not only utopian, it also fosters the worst illusions in "human rights" imperialism, which is simply a propaganda cover used by the imperialist powers for their wars of colonial subjugation.

Usually consumer boycotts are moralistic gestures with little or no effect. But if they were actually successful, BDS campaigns would hurt the Jewish and Arab working class of Israel, causing layoffs and thus weakening its social power. This would be a blow against the only social force that ultimately has the potential to smash the Zionist state from within through socialist revolution. Standing boycotts and campaigns for divestment and sanctions are an obstacle to the international working-class struggle that is necessary for the liberation of the Palestinians. (See "For Proletarian Internationalism, Not Appeals to Imperialism!" *Spartacist Canada* No. 166, Fall 2010.)

The root cause of the oppression of the Palestinians is that in Israel/Palestine two peoples have legitimate, conflicting claims to the same sliver of land—a problem for which there is no just solution under capitalism. Every bourgeois "solution" either perpetuates the oppression of the Palestinians or envisions a reversal of the terms of oppression, denying rights to the Israeli Jews. What is necessary is joint class struggle of both Jewish and Arab workers extending beyond the confines of that territory to the whole region—including the multiple countries where Palestinians are oppressed by Arab regimes.

We have no illusions that breaking the Israeli working class from its Zionist overlords will be an easy task. Indeed, it will likely require working-class upheavals elsewhere in the region in order to win the Jewish proletariat away from the ideology of Zionist chauvinism. But if there is to be any future free of exploitation and oppression for all the peoples of the Near East, the only solution lies in workers revolutions against the Zionist butchers, Arab dictators, mullahs and monarchs as well as against the paymaster of oppression in the Near East: the American bourgeoisie.

Such a task requires the construction of Trotskyist parties throughout the region and critically in the U.S. The Spartacus Youth Club—as the youth auxiliary of the Spartacist League, U.S. section of the International Communist League—is dedicated to the perspective of forging a revolutionary workers party here, in the belly of the imperialist beast. ■

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to-nature utopias, or a liberal reformist perspective of begging the capitalists for more farsighted policies. Thus, joined by the NDP [social-democratic New Democratic Party], many environmentalists advocate such schemes as cap-and-trade and carbon taxes, for which workers will pay the price. As Marxists we fight for a society that will provide more, not less, for the working people and the impoverished masses of the world.

When production is planned and directed at human need, decisions can be made about using different technologies—nuclear power, oil sands extraction and so forth—based on what is good for all of us. It will surely be necessary to generate more power and produce more goods, at least initially, but decisions about how to do so and manage the ecological consequences can be made by means of workers democracy and in the service of humanity.

Moreover, the development of communism will likely be accompanied by a downward drift in population, which will make a better standard of living possible in the long run. Evidence of this can already be seen under capitalism in the industrially advanced countries of the world, such as Canada, where economic and technological advancement has brought a substantial reduction in the birthrate. Under communism, both the division between town and country and economic dependence on the family will be overcome. No longer will poor peasants or agricultural workers be compelled to have more children in order to ensure enough manpower to work the land. Human beings will have far greater mastery over both their natural and social environments.

The continued prevalence of the superstitions, ignorance and bigotry of the Dark Ages—fostered by sundry leaders of the advanced industrial capitalist societies—is dramatic evidence of the decay of the capitalist system. Such backwardness and irrationality is mirrored in petty-bourgeois fads like faith healing, astrology and hostility to science and technology. That fulfillment of the most basic human needs is a luxury reserved to those who can pay the price, and that it comes at the cost of poisoning the resources we need to support future generations—this calls for a fundamental change. Socialist revolution will make modern technique, science, culture and education available to all, with a corresponding explosion in creative human energy. As Engels proclaimed in his widely publicized pamphlet, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* (1880):

> "Man's own social organisation, hitherto confronting him as a necessity imposed by nature and history, now becomes the result of his own free action. The extraneous objective forces that have hitherto governed history pass under the control of man himself. Only from that time will man himself, more and more consciously, make his own history—only from that time will the social causes set in movement by him have, in the main and in a constantly growing measure, the results intended by him. It is the ascent of man from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom." ■

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Kill List...

(continued from page 1)

'basehall cards' and decrees in total secrecy who should die. The power of accuser, prosecutor, judge, jury, and executioner are all consolidated in this one man, and those powers are exercised in the dark." It is not even necessary for the intended victims to be charged as terrorists or for there to be a shred of evidence against them. Anyone deemed an "associate" of a "terrorist" can end up on the kill list, with the authorities even spared the trouhle of having to concoct an imminent threat.

Greenwald expresses righteous anger at Democrats' falling into line behind Ohama's shredding of such Constitutional protections as the Fifth Amendment's guarantee of due process, He chastises "ohsequious lawyers telling their Party's leader that he is (of course) free to do exactly that which he wants to do, in exactly the same way that Bush got John Yoo to tell him that torture was not torture, and that even if it were, it was legal." No mystery to this. The Democrats have been just as diligent as the Republicans in using the "war on terror" to augment the repressive powers of the capitalist state because the aim of both parties is to operate that state machinery against the working class, minorities and the poor, at home and abroad.

The White Paper offers some legal basis for the kill list in the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF), which Congress passed with exactly one dissenting vote in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks. The Justice Department document reaffirms the global sweep of the "war on terror," stating that "none of the three branches of the U.S. Government has identified a strict geographical limit on the permissible scope of the AUMF's authorization." Under Obama, U.S. forces continue to kill and maim in wars, drone strikes and special operations from Central Asia to the Horn of Africa, while the administration cranks up the war on the rights of the U.S. population.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the Center for Constitutional Rights filed suit against the Obama government in 2010, challenging the placement of Anwar al-Awlaki on government kill lists before his death. A federal district court dismissed the case on the grounds that the issue of targeting for assassination was a "political question" to be taken up by the executive branch. The ACLU has now filed another suit charging that the killings of the al-Awlakis and Samir Khan violated the Constitutional guarantee against the deprivation of life without due process of law. Its February 6 statement on the new suit notes that "the government counts all military-age males in a strike zone as combatants unless there is explicit intelligence posthumously proving them innocent." (An "innocent" corpse is still a corpse.)

Facebook

Reuters

Rubble in Yemen from U.S. drone strike that killed 16-year-old U.S. citizen Abdulrahman al-Awlaki (inset) and six others on 14 October 2011.

Some of Obama's liberal critics ask that he at least go through the motions of getting prior approval before launching his "targeted" killings. One option they offer is to establish a special court for such purposes, akin to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) courts for wiretapping applications. Trumpeted as a check on the nation's secret police, FISA has never been anything more than a ruhher stamp. From 1979 to 2011, it denied all of *eleven* of nearly *32,000* wiretap applications. The bottom line for Ohama is not only that the White House must have the power to order U.S. citizens killed but that the documents explaining the "legal" rationale for this power must be classified, i.e., concealed. While some liheral critics bemoan Obama's lack of transparency in this matter, their concerns do not extend to his legions of non-American victims.

Remote-Control Murder

Guantánamo is not closed, but Obama is taking few prisoners. Over the last three years, his administration has carried out at least 239 covert drone strikes. The Air Force now trains more unmanned-systems operators than it does fighter and bomber pilots combined. The Bureau of Investigative Journalism estimates that CIA strikes in Pakistan between 2004 and 2013 have resulted in 3,468 deaths. In Somalia, the Bureau reports, up to 57 people described as civilians have been killed and in Yemen as many as 178. The key architect of the drone murder scheme is John Brennan, who is slated to be chief of the CIA, which directs many of the drone strikes. Brennan's résumé, spanning a 25-year CIA career, includes working as a top agency official during the torture interrogations carried out under the Bush administration.

On MSNBC's *Up with Chris Hayes* last year, Jeremy Scahill described the village of al-Majalah in Yemen after the first strike there authorized by Obama. With 35 women and children killed, the U.S. tried to palm it off as the work of the Yemeni government. But, as Scahill said, "We know from the Wikileaks cables that David Petraeus conspired with the president of Yemen to lie to the world about who did that bombing. It's murder—it's ***mass*** murder—when you say, 'We are going to bomb this area' because we believe a terrorist is there" (*Huffington Post*, 3 June 2012).

An editorial in the liheral *Nation* (6 June 2012) stated: "The drone strikes are inciting even more anti-American hatred in troubled places like Yemen as well as Pakistan.... It is hard to argue that they are making us safer when, for every suspect killed, one or more newly embittered militants emerge to take his place." In other words, the *Nation* feels that Obama has broken his only real 2008 campaign promise, which was to be a more effective chief executive for blood-drenched U.S. imperialism. The carnage wreaked by the Obama administration gives the verdict on the reformists—International Socialist Organization, Workers World Party, Party for Socialism and Liberation, et al.—who pushed pro-Democratic "anybody but Bush" politics in protests over the Iraq war and cheered Bush's replacement as a supposedly more benign Commander-in-Chief.

In "9/11 in Retrospect" (*Foreign Affairs*, September-Octoher 2011), Melvyn P. LeFller laid out that the Obama administration's strategy has been in continuity with that of the Bush administration and, in fact, others going back to the dawn of the 20th century. The September 11 attacks, this bourgeois historian writes, "did not change the world or transform the long-term trajectory of U.S. grand strategy." Rather, the U.S. "quest for supremacy" as well as "its preference for an open door and free markets, its concern with military supremacy, its readiness to act unilaterally when deemed necessary...all these remained, and remain, unchanged."

Wars, invasions, torture, executions, massacres of civilians, deployment of mercenaries, covert operations: all are integral to capitalism in its imperialist epoch, i.e., in its (prolonged) death agony. We wrote in "U.S. Imperialism's Torture, Inc." (*WV* No. 826, 14 May 2004):

> "Capitalist society was horn in hlood; modern imperialism continues the brutal practices of mass murder, torture and humiliation that accompany exploitation of labor and the ceaseless struggle between competing imperialist forces to dominate the world. From the Belgian Congo killing fields of King Leopold and the massacres in the Philippines by U.S. troops in the early days of its imperialist expansion to the first concentration camps, created by the Spanish in Cuba and a little later used by the British in South Africa in the Boer War, to Japanese imperialist atrocities in China and Nazi Germany's Holocaust, imperialism has created a world in constant, cruel convulsions."

Decaying Capitalism and the Imperial Presidency

The Obama administration's assertion of the power to assassinate U.S. citizens is a dangerous but entirely logical extension of the police-state powers assumed by the government after the September 11 terrorist attacks. In 2003, the Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee submitted an *amici curiae* brief on behalf of Jose Padilla, a U.S. citizen arrested in Chicago in 2002 on trumped-up charges, declared an "enemy combatant" and disappeared into a Navy brig in South Carolina. Tortured by extreme sensory deprivation and other measures, Padilla was initially threatened with execution. In the end, a civilian show trial sentenced him to 17 years. Our brief noted:

> "The 'war against terrorism' is a fiction, a political construct, not a military reality.... Like the 'war against communism' and the 'war against drugs,' this 'war' is a pretext to increase the state's police powers and repressive apparatus, constricting the democratic rights of the population."

The brief observed: "Following the Executive's own logic, Padilla could have been shot to death in the Chicago O'Hare airport, just as well as being taken into custody. Thus the rationale of the 'war against terrorism' is a construct justifying not only the right to disappear citizens, hut the right to assassinate them as well."

Promoting the myth of "national unity" against an ever-shifting "terror" threat, the U.S. ruling class has tried to get the population to willingly accept attacks on fundamental democratic rights and massively increased state snooping. We insisted in the immediate aftermath of September 11 that the enhanced police powers that would first be used against Muslims and Near Eastern and South Asian immigrants were ultimately aimed at the oppressed black population and the working class as a whole. This may not be evident today, with the absence of any massive social or class struggle, let alone a revolutionary threat to capitalist rule. But the Obama administration hinted at what may be in store when

Department of Defense

Rendition flight of U.S. "war on terror" captives.

New York Times Disappears Bradley Manning

The following February 13 letter by Ray Bishop, Workers Vanguard *editor, was sent to the Public Editor of the* New York Times, *Margaret Sullivan, following the publication of her article "Keeping Secrets" (9 February).*

You applaud the *Times*' decision to finally report the location of a U.S. drone base in Saudi Arabia while bemoaning how long it took the *Times* to approve releasing the information, which had been kept secret at the government's request. Maureen Dowd's column ("I'm Begging, Don't Hack the Hacks") printed the same day objects to the policy of drone attacks while raising alarm over Chinese hackers breaking into government and media computer systems. In neither piece was any mention made of Bradley Manning, who has suffered enormous abuse and faces a possible life sentence if a military court finds him guilty of releasing a trove of classified documents to WikiLeaks. That material shed welcome light on U.S. diplomatic schemes and wartime atrocities in Iraq and Afghanistan. The omission of his case is simply cowardice on the part of the *Times*, which you had earlier taken to task for ignoring the bulk of Manning's pretrial hearing in December.

You acknowledge that the policy of the *Times* is to keep information from the puhlic when Washington officials make the case that such news would threaten "national security." The other side of that coin is that, following the September 11, 2001 attacks, then-*Times* reporter Judith Miller recounted tales of Saddam Hussein's nonexistent "weapons of mass destruction" (the pretext for the U.S. invasion of Iraq). By contrast, making the documents available to WikiLeaks—which were suhsequently published in part by the *Times*—was an act of truth-telling. If indeed it was Bradley Manning who released the videos, reports and cables, he provided a valuable service to humanity and now deserves the support of all who oppose the barbarity and machinations revealed in them.

Immigration...

(continued from page 1)

necessary by the Tea Party types, on the southern border of Fortress America.

If a compromise immigration bill is achieved, it will undoubtedly contain the main elements of the "pathway to citizenship" put forth by Obama. In this scheme, undocumented immigrants would be required to register with the government, submit biometric data, pass criminal background and national security checks and pay fees and penalties before becoming eligible for a provisional legal status. If cleared, they then would have to wait until the existing legal immigration backlogs are cleared before joining the line for lawful permanent residency (a "green card"), and ultimately U.S. citizenship. The line proposed might as well stretch to infinity. Some Mexicans who have applied for legal residency have been waiting decades for their requests to be granted. Now some Republicans are up in arms because Obama proposes to reduce the wait to a mere eight years!

When announcing his latest scheme, the president said it was time to end a situation where eleven million undocumented immigrants "live their lives in the shadows." Indeed, he wants them out of the shadows and under the ever-watchful gaze of the capitalist state, all the better to regulate the flow of low-wage labor. Undocumented immigrants, mostly from Mexico and other parts of Latin America, toil at some of the most backbreaking and dangerous jobs in this country. It is a testament to their militancy and class consciousness that a sizable number of these workers are often involved in union organizing battles, which in California signed up 100,000 new workers last year, bucking the continued nationwide slide in union membership. The labor movement must demand that *all* immigrants have immediate and full citizenship rights and must fight against every instance of discrimination, calling for no deportations.

Field Hands, Scientists and Students

Not a few immigrants fled their homelands to escape grinding poverty and brutal repression resulting from U.S. imperialist plunder. At the same time, the capitalist rulers will always attempt to tap new sources of cheaper labor, particularly immigrants from less-developed countries. The *Wall Street Journal* (1 February) recently pumped for a guest worker program that "would allow low-skilled immigrants to legally fill temporary labor demands, and it is absolutely necessary if we are to avoid a future flood of illegal immigrants." The central focus of the current proposals is on creating a large pool of completely vulnerable immigrants who will be policed utilizing every bit of biometric and other data available and made to pay large sums of money for the privilege of working for a pittance with no job protection, no assured immigration status and no right to any kind of welfare. This offering is bread and water rationing—in fact, a kind of indentured servitude.

As a result, some older undocumented immigrants look with fondness on the presidency of Ronald Reagan, who signed legislation that granted permanent residency to some three million undocumented immigrants, raising some real possibility of their becoming citizens. Since then, the decay of American capitalist society has advanced considerably. Such largesse will not be granted at a time when there are legions of the unemployed and an all-sided anti-labor offensive is driving down wages, even for unionized workers, to near Wal-Mart levels.

In recent weeks, leaders of high-tech industries have flooded Washington to push for comprehensive legislation, propelled by a belief that they will only obtain the substantial increase in temporary visas for skilled labor that they require if Congress passes such a bill. Their quest is primarily a comment on the deterioration of American society and its public education system. Ever fewer high school graduates possess the academic skills, let alone monetary resources, necessary for the intensive university training that produces scientists, engineers and mathematicians. Many U.S. manufacturers have concerns similar to their counterparts' at Google and Intel. With the unions here on their knees and costs elsewhere rising, Caterpillar and other industrial giants are relocating plants from outside the country to the "low-wage" U.S., only to have their research and development staff from China and India waiting years for a green card.

American universities, which still provide some of the best education available in these fields, have been increasingly populated with foreign graduate students, especially from China. However, it has become difficult for these students to obtain a visa to stay in the country after graduation. Meanwhile, the Stalinist bureaucracy in Beijing is putting up money to make it more attractive for those with advanced degrees to return to the Chinese deformed workers state. A more farsighted section of the U.S. bourgeoisie is now expressing concern that it might some day lose its "edge on innovation."

Last year, immigrant college students, many of them undocumented, marched, staged sit-ins and even outed themselves to the authorities to draw attention to immigration reform, in particular to the Dream Act, which stalled in Congress in 2010 despite Obama's support for the measure. This plan, also favored by the reformist International Socialist Organization (ISO), would allow immigrant youth to apply for permanent residency if they attend college—an improbable option for the vast majority—or serve in the armed forces for two years. Thus, most of these youth are left with the grotesque prospect of joining the imperialist military that has slaughtered millions in its invasions of foreign lands as other branches of the same capitalist state kill, imprison and deport those who may be their relatives. We say: No to the Dream Act!

AP

Immigrant rights activists rally outside White House two days after Obama's re-election, calling on him to keep his promises on immigration reform.

The ISO seeks to tinker with the terms of anti-immigrant repression, calling for more "bold" protests "to force a change in the pro-business priorities for immigration legislation—and to win a proposal that's worthy of the term 'reform'" (socialistworker.org, 31 January). These shameless reformists offer nothing other than to dress up U.S. capitalism, as if a fair immigration policy shorn of "pro-business priorities" is possible under an inherently unjust system rooted in the exploitation of the many by the few. We do not advise the bourgeoisie on its priorities. Our aim is to instill in the multiracial working class the importance of defending immigrants and fighting every manifestation of oppression as part of preparing it for the necessary revolutionary battle to end capitalist rule.

For a Class-Struggle Perspective!

Marching in lockstep with the government's campaign against undocumented workers are the union tops. These labor traitors not only are now actively collaborating with the Chamber of Commerce in hammering out the details of a guest worker program but also have embraced e-Verify, a government database of everyone legally permitted to work in the U.S. AFL-CIO head Richard Trumka baldly states that e-Verify is "part of the system we've proposed."

At hundreds of workplaces across the country, mass firings of immigrant workers have followed audits of Social Security numbers using the e-Verify database ("desktop raids"). This cornerstone of Obama's immigration policy, dishonestly billed as "employer enforcement," has time and again helped employers get rid of labor activists and head off unionization drives. Immigrant families are ravaged, as the breadwinners are thrown out of their jobs with few prospects for new employment, not to mention a much higher risk of deportation.

The venal union bureaucrats are thus lining up against the basic class interests of the proletariat. For these staunch supporters of the political parties of the class enemy, above all the Democrats, these latest betrayals are simply a continuation of a general policy of appeasement of the capitalist rulers that has resulted in the withering of union power. Battered by a wave of attacks on public workers, union membership fell to 11.3 percent of the workforce last year, the lowest rate since 1916.

Revitalizing the labor movement will require hard class struggle, including on behalf of all those ground down by capitalism. Immigrant workers, often from places with a rich history of social and class struggle, will have a vital role to play. It is through uniting black, white and immigrant workers in struggle against their common class enemy that the working class can surmount the racial and ethnic divisions long sown by the exploiters to divide and weaken labor. But when it comes to an appetite for struggle for the unity and integrity of the working class against chauvinism and racism, the union bureaucrats are decidedly anorexic.

The anti-immigrant campaign has served to deflect attention from the fact that the "Great Recession," which has brought widespread job loss and misery, is the direct product of the capitalist profit system. A program for the mobilization of working-class unity against capitalist exploitation and oppression requires that the current labor misleaders be replaced by a new generation of class-struggle militants. It will take this kind of leadership to sever labor's ties to the Democratic Party and promote the building of a revolutionary workers party committed to overturning the imperialist order through socialist revolution. This is the only road to ending the exploitation of man by man, as well as all forms of oppression. ■

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the FBI staged raids against leftists in the Midwest and elsewhere in 2010 on the grounds that their support for Palestinian nationalists and Latin American guerrillas constituted "material support to terrorism."

The lack of class and social struggle has emboldened the capitalist rulers in their sidestepping of Constitutional niceties as well as their slaughter abroad. But make no mistake: The bourgeoisie is determined to build up its powers of repression so that they can be used to put down any perceived threat to its rule and profits.

The working class cannot advance its struggle against exploitation without also defending democratic rights and opposing every instance of imperialist barbarism carried out by its own ruling class. The tiny class of obscenely rich capitalist exploiters rules over a society marked by decaying infrastructure, joblessness, low wages for most of those who have jobs, abject urban and rural poverty, massive incarceration particularly of black and Latino men and women, and an education system where quality is increasingly the preserve of the wealthy. This social destruction has been wrought with the active complicity of the pro-capitalist, "America first" trade-union bureaucracy, which has presided over the vast decline in union membership and rarely engages in action against the bosses' one-sided class war.

The economic decline of the U.S. in recent decades has been accompanied by unchallenged military superiority abroad, to which the existence of the Soviet Union had stood as a counterweight until its counterrevolutionary destruction in 1991-92. That dominance is something that no wing of the U.S. ruling class will concede voluntarily, just as it will never concede its ability to answer with massive repression any genuine challenge to its rule "at home." Power must be *wrested* from the blood-soaked rulers as the Bolshevik-led workers in Russia wrested power from the bourgeois rulers in October 1917, smashing the existing state apparatus and replacing it with the dictatorship of the proletariat.

From the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the counterrevolutionary slaughters in Korea and Indochina to the neocolonial wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. imperialists have repeatedly demonstrated that they are the biggest force of organized terror on the planet. Having long outlived any progressive role, the capitalist system must be overturned from within. We seek to forge the necessary instrument to lead the working class in struggle against its "own" rulers—a revolutionary, internationalist proletarian party dedicated to nothing other, nothing less than new October Revolutions. ■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

UC, State Assembly Crack Down on Pro-Palestinian Protest

Zionist Witchhunt on California Campuses

LOS ANGELES—House Resolution 35 (H.R. 35), passed in the lower house of the California legislature last August, is another step in the campaign to smear, censor and set up for persecution student activists who protest the crimes of the Israeli state. H.R. 35 upholds the age-old slander that any criticism of Israel equals anti-Semitism. Furthermore, it terrorist-baits student groups, alleging they "encourage support for terrorist organizations" and "openly advocate terrorism against Israel and the Jewish people." Even while it does not make new law, this resolution by the California State Assembly retrospectively commends past attacks by the University of California (UC) administration against Palestinian rights advocates, while urging the prohibition of even the tamest protests that students are undertaking or may attempt in the future.

H.R. 35 approvingly cites language from the European Union—an imperialist-dominated alliance for the exploitation of Europe's working class—as a model for slandering pro-Palestinian protesters. The resolution embraces the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights' working definition of anti-Semitism as "certain language or behavior [that] demonizes and delegitimizes Israel." It specifically refers to "anti-Semitic discourse...to falsely describe Israel," "including that Israel is a racist, apartheid, or Nazi state, that Israel is guilty of heinous crimes against humanity such as ethnic cleansing and genocide."

Thus the bill aims to suppress the truth: the Zionist state *is* guilty of heinous crimes against humanity. Recall the Israeli-organized 1982 massacre of some 2,000 Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Lebanon; the 2010 massacre of nine activists onboard the *Mavi Marmara* ship carrying humanitarian aid for the virtual concentration camp of the Gaza Strip; Israel's bloody November 2012 offensive against Gaza, where more than 1,000 air strikes reduced homes to rubble and slaughtered 162 men, women and children. On an "ordinary" day, Palestinians are subjected to hunger, unemployment, humiliation, fear and forced confinement behind a separation wall. ***Defend the Palestinians! All Israeli troops and settlers out of the Occupied Territories now! Down with the starvation blockade of Gaza!***

Young Spartacus

The passage of this provocative bill did not go unopposed. Notably, the UC Berkeley graduate student assembly voted overwhelmingly to condemn H.R. 35 in a resolution passed last November. Jewish Voice for Peace also condemned the bill in a 29 August 2012 statement. H.R. 35 is aimed explicitly against the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) activists, but it also represents a threat to the entire left, as it gives campus administrations the green light to censor and repress political activity. ***Down with H.R. 35!***

Capps/Daily Californian

Pro-Palestinian students stage "mock checkpoint" on Sproul Plaza, UC Berkeley, 28 February 2012. Federal officials have launched investigation of campus protests against Israel's oppression of Palestinian Arabs.

The bill absurdly tries to portray an atmosphere of widespread anti-Semitism on California campuses. The truth is that Arabs, Muslims and pro-Palestinian activists of all backgrounds—including Jewish students who are anti-Zionist—are the ones under the gun. When UC Irvine student protesters stood up during a February 2010 speech by Israeli ambassador and war criminal Michael Oren, correctly calling him an "accomplice to genocide," they were arrested and sentenced to three years' informal probation, community service and fines. Appeals are still ongoing. (See "Overturn the Convictions of the Irvine 11!" *WV* No. 995, 3 February 2012.) The administration also extended its witchhunt to the Muslim Student Union, suspending the group at UC Irvine.

Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) groups on UC campuses have received death threats, including a 2008 e-mail that reads, "The day the world finally nukes all you subhuman sand monkeys will be a day to rejoice.... Die." In the spring of 2012, UC Davis students sought the administration's protection after Zionist supporters of StandWithUs (SWU) used pepper spray against pro-Palestinian protesters. In response, UC president Mark Yudof sided with SWU and equated the political speech of Palestinian rights advocates with racist attacks. These are just a few of the incidents cited in the "Letter to University of California President Advising Him of Need to Protect Pro-Palestinian Speech on Campus" (Center for Constitutional Rights, 3 December 2012).

For years during the annual "Israeli Apartheid Week," the SJP at UC Berkeley has set up "mock checkpoints" to protest the very real ones that harass, detain and terrorize Palestinians daily. With college students playing the role of soldiers and wielding toy guns, this simulation of Palestinian reality deeply disturbed the local Zionists, who mobilized to ban such political theater as well as other SJP events. In 2011, Jessica Felber—a paid employee of the Hasbara Fellowships program that trains students on how to oppose pro-Palestinian activism—filed a lawsuit against UC. In it she claimed that criticism of Israel is "anti-Semitic" and that allowing such speech abets a "hostile environment" for Jewish students. Although the charges against the university were dismissed, Felber's lawyers filed another complaint with the Office for Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Education. This "investigation" is ongoing.

Abolish the Administration!

While contesting Felber's accusations, the UC administration threw its weight behind the Zionist witchhunt, utilizing its "President's Advisory Council on Campus Climate, Culture, & Inclusion" that produced a July 2012 "Campus Climate

continued on page 9

Pro-Israel Furor at Brooklyn College

A gang of rabid Zionists waged an unsuccessful campaign to shut down a February 7 Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) forum at Brooklyn College (BC), which featured liberal academic Judith Butler and Palestinian BDS spokesman Omar Barghouti. Alan Dershowitz, who infamously championed the use of torture as part of the "war on terror," and Democratic state assemblyman Dov Hikind, an avowed former member of the fascistic Jewish Defense League, took the lead in this provocation. At a press conference with Hikind and others, city council member David Greenfield slandered the timid, liberal BDS campaign as a "hate-filled, anti-Semitic, pro-terrorist movement." After the event, the Anti-Defamation League published an ad in the *New York Times* (8 February) that read, "In its support for the 'right of return' for refugees, they [the BDS activists] are advocating...the destruction of the Jewish state through demography."

In a January 29 letter to BC president Karen L. Gould, ten prominent New York City politicians demanded that the event be cancelled and/or official sponsorship revoked. The letter also suggested that the city council might withhold future funding to Brooklyn College—where the student population is nearly 20 percent Jewish. Two days later, 19 "progressive" politicians (including Democratic mayoral contenders Christine Quinn, John Liu, Bill de Blasio and Bill Thompson) also demanded that BC revoke its sponsorship of the event. President Gould refused to cancel the BDS forum. At the same time, according to BC Tanger Hillel's Web site, Gould issued a statement that did not utter a word of opposition to the slanders made against BDS and said, "We deeply value our Israeli partners and would not endorse any action that would imperil the State of Israel."

NYC mayor Michael Bloomberg—a vocal supporter of Israel who presides over the NYPD's anti-Muslim spying program—sided with Gould and essentially ordered his minions on the city council to back off. The humbled politicians retracted their demand in a sycophantic February 6 letter to Gould. Chemi Shalev opined in the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* (9 February) that the campaign to shut down the Brooklyn College event left the Zionists looking "inflated and melodramatic" and "unhinged." Shalev also lamented that this was a "PR coup" for the BDS activists.

The forum drew a huge audience and gained national and international publicity. Outside the event, Zionists faced off against a group of demonstrators that included supporters of the reformist International Socialist Organization and a group of orthodox Jews against Israel. Supporters of the New York Spartacus Youth Club and the Spartacist League sold *Workers Vanguard* to the crowd lined up outside and held signs reading "Down With the Zionist Witchhunt at Brooklyn College! Defend the Palestinians!" and "For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!"

WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 1019

8 March 2013

Exposed U.S. Imperialist Crimes

Hail Bradley Manning! Free Him Now!

Getty

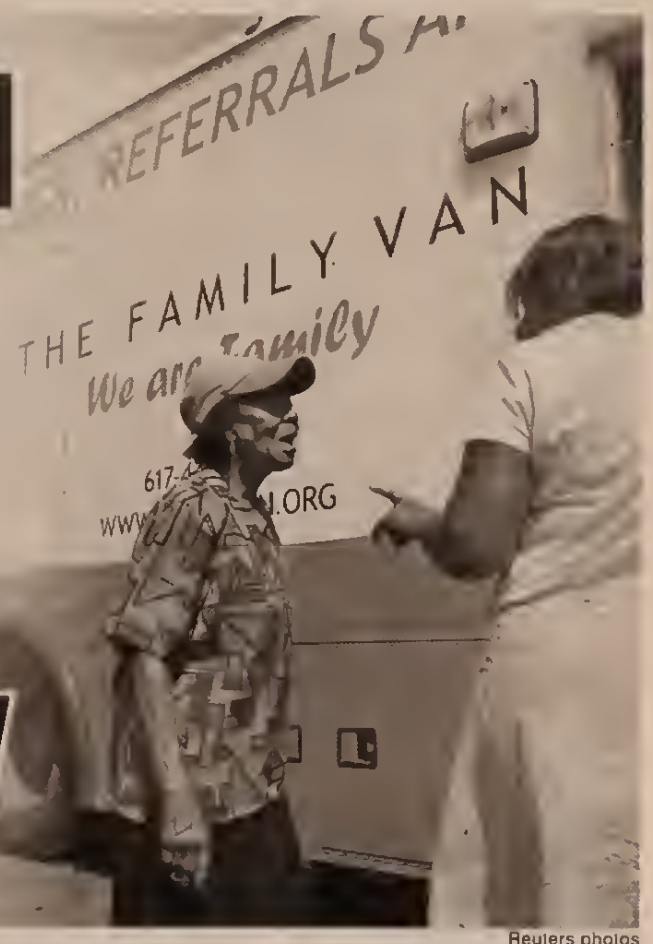
After enduring nearly three years of detention, at times under torturous conditions, on February 28 Army Private Bradley Manning confessed that he had provided WikiLeaks a trove of military and diplomatic documents that exposed U.S. imperialist schemes and wartime atrocities. Manning's guilty plea on ten of 22 counts against him could land him in prison for 20 years. But this pound of flesh is not enough for the imperialist rulers, who not only seek vengeance but are also determined to silence anyone perceived as an obstacle to their designs for world domination. A day after Manning confessed, military prosecutors announced plans to try him on the remaining counts, including "aiding the enemy" and violating the Espionage Act. Trial is expected to begin in early June. If convicted on these charges, Manning faces life in prison.

In lifting a bit of the veil of secrecy and lies with which the capitalist rulers cover their depredations, Bradley Manning performed a great service to workers and oppressed around the world.

continued on page 2

Working Families Foot the Bill

U.S. Health Care and the Elderly: Capitalist Cruelty



Reuters photos

Low-income Boston residents depend on weekly van for medical screening (above). People mass outside four-day free clinic in Los Angeles, September 2012 (below).

The squabbling by the Obama administration and Congressional Republicans over how to implement spending cuts—including the recent "sequestration" of funds for everything from the Pentagon to national parks—has dominated headlines. While Social Security and Medicaid were exempted from this round of cuts, there can be no doubt that these programs are in the sights of both the Democrats and Republicans. Barack Obama's health care "reform" of three years ago slashed Medicare payments by over $700 billion, and in the recent deficit negotiations the president reportedly pushed for further cuts of $400 billion to Medicare and other social programs. Both capitalist parties at bottom agree that the budget ax must fall primarily on society's most vulnerable: the aged, the poor, the disabled and the chronically ill.

Obama has repeatedly proposed cutting $100 billion from Medicaid—the federal assistance program for the poor—which has become the main source of aid for the long-term care of the elderly and disabled. With encouragement from the White House, both Democratic- and Republican-controlled statehouses have been massively rolling back Medicaid benefits, eliminating coverage for many medical conditions and striking tens of thousands of people from the states' rolls. To cap spending on long-term care, 26 states—among them New York, California and Illinois—have petitioned Washington for approval to turn millions of Medicaid recipients over to private "managed-care organizations." Those outfits would be paid a fixed sum for providing a lifetime of (grossly inadequate) care.

These and future cuts in social programs will add enormously to the already crushing burden on families as they try to cope with providing care for aging parents or disabled family members. *The Elder Care Study* (2010) by the nonprofit Families and Work Institute found that during the five years preceding the study, fully *40 percent* of the country's workforce had provided elder care to family members. On average, such care represents the equivalent of a part-time job and typically lasts for over four years. Although family caregivers often perform medical tasks such as administering IVs and injections, caring for wounds and operating dialysis or other specialized equipment, they normally receive no help from anyone except other relatives—no home visits by nurses, medical assistants or other health care professionals.

The percentage of adults providing personal care and/or financial assistance to an aged parent has more than tripled over the past 15 years, reflecting the rapid increase in the country's elderly population. According to the 2010 census, the number of those 85 years and older increased by 30 percent during the previous decade. Many studies have documented the dramatic toll that the stress and anxiety of caring for aging parents takes on adult children's health, from higher mortality risks and rates of hospitalization to greater incidence of chronic disease.

Overall, two-thirds of caregivers are women. As they marry and give birth

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Manning...

(continued from page 1)

All who oppose the imperialist barbarity and machinations revealed in the material he provided must join in demanding his immediate freedom. Also crucially important is the defense of Julian Assange against the vendetta by the U.S., Britain and their cohorts, who are attempting to railroad him to prison by one means or another for his role in running WikiLeaks.

In a 35-page statement he read to the military court after entering his plea, Manning told of his journey from nearly being rejected in basic training to becoming an army intelligence analyst. In that capacity he came across mountains of evidence of U.S. duplicity and war crimes. The materials he provided to WikiLeaks included military logs documenting 120,000 civilian deaths in Iraq and Afghanistan and a formal military policy of covering up torture, rape and murder. A quarter-million diplomatic cables address all manner of lethal operations within U.S. client states, from the "drug war" in Mexico to drone strikes in Yemen. He also released files containing assessments of detainees held at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. These documents show that the government continued to hold many who, Manning stated, were believed or known to be innocent, as well as "low level foot soldiers that did not have useful intelligence."

The Pentagon declared war against WikiLeaks following the release of a video, conveyed by Manning, of a 2007 U.S. Apache helicopter airstrike in Iraq that killed at least 12 people, including two Reuters journalists. American forces are then shown firing on a van that pulled up to help the victims. Manning said he was most alarmed by the "bloodlust they appeared to have." He described how instead of calling for medical attention for a seriously wounded individual trying to crawl to safety, an aerial crew team member "asks for the wounded person to pick up a weapon so that he can have a reason to engage."

By January 2010, Manning said, he "began to become depressed with the situation that we found ourselves increasingly mired in year after year" and decided to make public many of the documents he had backed up as part of his work as an analyst. Manning first offered the materials to the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*. Not getting anywhere with these pillars of the bourgeois press establishment, in February 2010 he made his first submission to WikiLeaks. He attached a note advising that "this is possibly one of the more significant documents of our time removing the fog of war and revealing the true nature of twenty-first century asymmetric warfare. Have a good day."

The charge of "aiding the enemy"—i.e., Al Qaeda—is especially ominous. This used to mean things like military sabotage and handing over information on troop movements to a battlefield enemy. In Manning's case, the prosecution claims that the very act of publicizing U.S. military and diplomatic activities, some of which took place years before, amounted to "indirect" communication with Al Qaeda. Manning told the court that he believed that public access to the information "could spark a domestic debate on the role of the military and our foreign policy in general." He hoped that this "might cause society to reevaluate the need or even the desire to engage in counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations that ignore the complex dynamics of the people living in the affected environment everyday." But by the lights of the imperialists' war on terror, any exposure of their depredations can be construed as support to the "terrorist" enemy, whoever that might be.

Illinois State Historical Library

Socialist Party leader Eugene V. Debs, imprisoned in Atlanta under Espionage Act for opposing World War I.

The Pentagon intends to call no fewer than 141 witnesses in its show trial, including four people to testify anonymously. One of them, designated as "John Doe," is believed to be a Navy SEAL who participated in the raid that killed Osama bin Laden. "Doe" is alleged to have grabbed three disks from bin Laden's Abbottabad, Pakistan, compound on which was stored four files' worth of the WikiLeaks material provided by Manning. Also reportedly retrieved from bin Laden's hard drives was a trove of American porn videos. Are Obama & Co. planning to put the owners of Vivid Entertainment in the dock as well?

Nor do charges under the Espionage Act have to have anything to do with actual spying. The law was one of an array of measures adopted to criminalize antiwar activity after U.S. imperialism's entry into the First World War. It mandated imprisonment for any act deemed to interfere with the recruitment of troops. Among its first and most prominent victims was Socialist Party spokesman Eugene V. Debs, who was jailed for a June 1918 speech at a workers' rally in Canton, Ohio, where he denounced the war as capitalist slaughter and paid tribute to the leaders of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. Dozens of Industrial Workers of the World organizers were also thrown into prison. So broad was the law's reach that Robert Goldstein, producer of the movie *The Spirit of '76*, was convicted and originally sentenced to ten years on the grounds that the film's depiction of the brutality of British soldiers during the American Revolution would undermine support for a U.S. wartime ally!

In the early 1970s, the Nixon government tried, unsuccessfully, to use this law to go after Daniel Ellsberg, whose release of the Pentagon Papers to the *New York Times* shed light on the history of U.S. imperialism's losing war against the Vietnamese workers and peasants. Obama has happily picked up Nixon's mantle. Manning's prosecution will be the sixth time the Obama administration has used the Espionage Act against the source of an unauthorized leak of classified information—more than the combined total under all prior administrations since the law's enactment in 1917. As we have repeatedly stressed, Barack Obama, who came into office with broad support from liberals and the left, is simply carrying out his duties as Commander-in-Chief, stepping up attacks on democratic rights to pave the way for further imperialist depredations and attacks on the workers and oppressed at home.

Noting his initial uncertainty about releasing the diplomatic cables, Manning remarked that he had "once read and used a quote on open diplomacy written after the First World War and how the world would be a better place if states would avoid making secret pacts and deals with and against each other." He added, "I thought these cables were a prime example of a need for a more open diplomacy."

Behind the imperialists' diplomatic skullduggery—conducted at times with and at times against one another—is their drive to exploit the world's workers and oppressed in accord with their distinct interests. The Obama administration's vicious retaliation against both Manning and Assange shows that nothing in this regard has changed since revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky in November 1917 described secret diplomacy as "a necessary tool for a propertied minority which is compelled to deceive the majority in order to subject it to its interests." Trotsky, co-leader with V.I. Lenin of the 1917 October Revolution, made this point in a statement he issued as Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the newly fledged Soviet workers state. Trotsky was announcing the publication and abrogation of secret treaties hatched by the prior tsarist regime as well as the bourgeois Provisional Government with their imperialist allies.

One of the first acts of the Soviet government was to issue a decree on peace removing Russia from the slaughter of interimperialist World War I and demanding of all belligerents a "just, democratic" peace without annexations or indemnities. The Soviet newspaper *Izvestia* soon began publication of treaties concluded during the war. Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party was driven by the perspective of world proletarian revolution. Indeed, the October Revolution was a beacon of liberation for the exploited and oppressed in the advanced capitalist countries and in the colonial and semicolonial world. Along with the Soviet government's renunciation of predatory agreements reached by prior regimes, the publication of the treaties helped spark waves of struggle by those under the boot heel of the imperialists, whose dirty deals were now laid bare.

For proletarian revolutionaries, the materials provided by Manning are of real value in opening the eyes of the world's working people to the systematic violence and lies that prop up capitalist rule. Opponents of imperialist occupations and war must be won to the understanding that it will require a series of socialist revolutions to put an end to the capitalist order. It is to provide the necessary leadership to the proletariat in this struggle that we are committed to forging Leninist-Trotskyist parties around the world. ■

In Honor of International Women's Day

TROTSKY

LENIN

In a pioneering Marxist study, August Bebel, a founding leader of the German Social Democratic Party, explained that women's emancipation required their full integration into economic and social life. This will be possible only in a socialist society based on material abundance and scientific technique, as the household tasks of the family are carried out by social institutions and the role of women will no longer be defined primarily as breeders of the next generation.

One factor is of leading importance in the question of population in the future—*the higher, freer position which all women will then occupy*. Leaving exceptions aside, intelligent and energetic women are not as a rule inclined to give life to a large number of children as "the gift of God," and to spend the best years of their own lives in pregnancy, or with a child at their breasts. This disinclination for numerous children, which even now is entertained by most women, may—all the solicitude notwithstanding that a Socialist society will bestow upon pregnant women and mothers—be rather strengthened than weakened. In our opinion, there lies in this the great probability that the increase of population will proceed slower than in bourgeois society....

In Socialist society, where alone mankind will be truly free and planted on its natural basis, it will direct its own development knowingly along the line of natural law. In all epochs hitherto, society handled the questions of production and distribution, as well as of the increase of population without the knowledge of the laws that underlie them,—hence, unconsciously. In the new social order, equipped with the knowledge of the laws of its own development, society will proceed consciously and planfully.

SOCIALISM IS SCIENCE, APPLIED WITH FULL UNDERSTANDING TO ALL THE FIELDS OF HUMAN ACTIVITY.

—August Bebel, *Woman Under Socialism* (1879)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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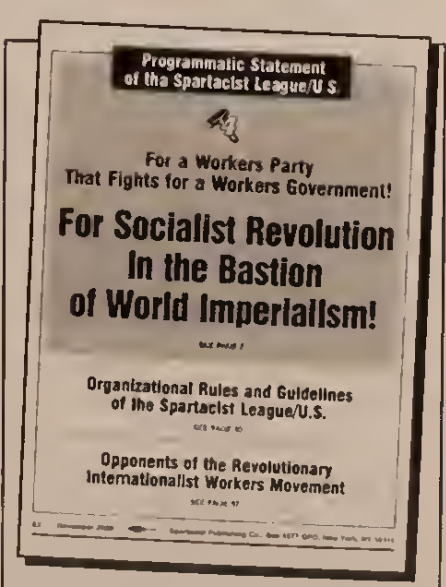
CORRECTION

The article "Britain 1919: Class Struggle, Racism and Labour Reformism" (*WV* No. 1018, 22 February) incorrectly stated that the French military occupation of the German Ruhr took place following World War II. It took place after World War I.



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Union Busting Grain Bosses Up Ante Against ILWU

MARCH 4—On February 27, the United Grain Corp. in the Port of Vancouver, Washington, locked out members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU). Managers and other scab labor brought in by the professional strike-breaking company J.R. Gettier & Associates began loading grain on the ship in port while three other vessels lined up on the Columbia River. Scab tugs are on hand to get the ships in and out of the terminal. Standing behind this operation is the armed might of the U.S. Coast Guard, whose sights are aimed at any union protest that would interfere with the ships' passage. This is an open declaration of war against one of the few remaining bastions of labor power in this country!

For months, the grain bosses have been out to break the back of the ILWU, which has worked the terminals in the region since the 1930s. When union members voted down the "last, best and final" contract offer from the Pacific Northwest Grain Handlers Association in late December by a resounding 93.8 percent, the grain export goliaths told them to shove it. Either they were to work under the terms of this offer—which shreds union working and safety conditions and undermines the hiring hall and other gains won in hard-fought struggle—or they wouldn't work at all. The ILWU tops caved in to this ultimatum, banking on trying to use to their advantage the very laws whose purpose is to subordinate the unions to the interests of the bosses.

At the same time, the union bureaucrats looked for leverage by pursuing separate negotiations with the grain terminal owners TEMCO, a joint venture between the Minnesota-based Cargill and CHS Inc. On the same day the union was locked out by United Grain, the ILWU issued a press release announcing that an agreement had been reached with TEMCO. Although few details have been released, according to the president of Vancouver ILWU Local 4 it extends work shifts to a deadly dangerous 12 hours and eliminates the union's supercargo clerks, who oversee the loading and unloading of ships. These jobs would be handed over to management, giving the company a greater whip hand over the workforce. Even leaving these and other concessions aside, the TEMCO agreement explicitly states that it "is subject to modification given the details of a final agreement between the ILWU and the Pacific Northwest Grain Elevator Operators." In other words, however bad it is, the other grain companies can make it worse!

AP

February 27: ILWU members locked out by United Grain picket at entrance to Port of Vancouver, Washington.

United Grain—whose Vancouver terminal has the largest grain storage capacity in the region, shipping out 16 percent of U.S. wheat exports—gave its answer by locking out the union. Claiming that it had employed a former FBI agent to investigate "suspicious incidents involving equipment failure and damage," the company fired a Local 4 official, charging him with efforts to "sabotage and destroy company property." United Grain's CEO declared, "Deliberate attempts by an ILWU leader to damage equipment, disrupt operations and put co-workers at risk cannot be tolerated." Oddly, this alleged "sabotage" is said to have taken place over *two months ago*, on December 22. But only now are they trotting out this "investigation" by an agent well-schooled in the dirty trade of fabrications and other deadly set-ups. It is a convenient tale to further the aim of breaking the ILWU.

On the first day of the lockout, the ILWU shut down the whole Port of Vancouver, stranding a car carrier ship loaded with 1,800 Subarus. But that stopped the next day when an arbitrator for the Pacific Maritime Association ruled the walkout illegal. The rest of the port is now up and running with ILWU labor, even as grain is being worked by scabs. Once again, the ILWU bureaucracy looks not to mobilizing the social power of the union and its allies to meet this union-busting attack through, for example, building mass picket lines that no scabs would dare to cross. Instead, the union has just filed an "unfair labor practice" suit with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). The injunctions and massive fines brought by the NLRB against the ILWU when it actually fought to defend itself against the EGT grain consortium in Longview, Washington, in 2011 should make it more than obvious that this agency's whole purpose is to enforce anti-union laws, not to be "fair" to labor.

After ILWU officials had agreed to the union working under the terms of the overwhelmingly rejected contract with the Grain Handlers Association, we observed in "Longshore Unions Under the Gun" (*WV* No. 1015, 11 January):

> "There is no question of the stakes faced by the longshore unions, particularly now the ILWU. But one thing is for

continued on page 9

Union Tops Sell Out School Bus Strike

A month-long strike by school bus drivers and matrons organized in Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 1181 ended abruptly in defeat on February 15 when the ATU tops sent the strikers back to work with nothing but empty pockets and empty promises. The 8,800 workers—black, white, Latino, Caribbean and East European—kept up picket lines in the bitter winter cold to thwart Mayor Michael Bloomberg's union-busting scheme to rob them of job protections won in their last strike, a bitterly fought three-month battle in 1979. The protections guaranteed that workers are hired according to citywide union seniority lists regardless of which bus company wins a city contract.

Bloomberg provoked the strike by putting bus contracts out for re-bid without the job protections. The city is gunning for the jobs and wages of unionized drivers and matrons, which now start at $14 and $11 respectively—and they have to rely on unemployment in the summer. In NYC, that means they're close to poverty. When more than 100 matrons showed up for work after the strike at one cockroach outfit in Red Hook, Brooklyn, the boss told them they were fired but could be rehired by another subsidiary if they quit the ATU. Hundreds more drivers and matrons were blocked from returning to work, as the bus companies kept scabs on the job and wrangled with the union about putting ATU members back on the buses. Many are threatened with losing their jobs at the end of the school year, with no assurance of re-hire when new contractors take over in September.

Bloomberg, the tenth-richest person in the U.S., is bludgeoning a workforce whose average wage is $35,000 per year—way below what the legal minimum wage should be. But after all this is the same guy who recently let slip at a press conference that "nobody's sleeping on the streets" of NYC, which had even his own supporters rolling their eyes. With his mayoral "legacy" at stake as his third term draws to a close, Bloomberg sees crushing the bus workers as a pavestone toward busting the teachers and other big municipal unions—or at least leaving his successor better fixed to do so.

William Farrington

February 20: Owner of Brooklyn school bus firm tells more than 100 matrons they are fired as they returned after month-long strike.

With the city administration playing hardball, five leading Democratic Party mayoral hopefuls, working in cahoots with the ATU leadership, intervened to end the strike by pledging to "revisit" the dispute if elected. What their statement actually promised was that a Democratic mayor would protect jobs "within the bidding process" in a way that would be "fiscally responsible for taxpayers." This is just another formula for wage cuts, assuming that those who went on strike even keep their jobs. While the likes of Bloomberg revel in sticking it to the unions, the Democratic Party of capital wields the same knife, but with pearly whites showing. For a vivid example, workers in New York need look no further than Albany, where Governor Andrew Cuomo has gone after public-sector unions and utility workers with a vengeance. This does not stop the labor bureaucracy from touting the Democrats as "friends of labor."

In the context of the current coast-to-coast onslaught against labor, the school

continued on page 8

Health Care...

(continued from page 1)

at an increasingly later age, more are becoming part of the "sandwich generation"—adults who are responsible for the care of both young children and elderly parents at the same time. Today, nearly 40 percent of women caring for elderly relatives are still raising children of their own, with many of those women also holding down a full-time job. In this capitalist class society, the enormous costs of providing elder care, which should be borne by society as a whole, fall on individual working-class and poor families and, above all, women.

For Free, Quality Health Care for All!

A 2007 study, *Family Caregivers: What They Spend, What They Sacrifice*, by hospice provider Evercare estimated that caregivers incurred out-of-pocket expenses averaging over $5,500 per year. Low-income families in particular can scarcely hope to recover from such costs. The study noted: "The lowest income family caregivers have the highest burden of care in terms of both the number of hours they spend helping their family member and in their actual proportion of income spent on care."

In fully one-third of working families faced with the demands of elder care, one or both parents are forced to reduce the number of hours worked—or to quit working entirely—thus deepening their financial distress. The impact on caregivers leaving the workforce is devastating, as it means not only lost wages but also diminished Social Security benefits for their retirement years. Various studies have estimated the average lifetime financial loss to be from $300,000 to over $650,000. A downward spiral is unfolding: As the current generation of caregivers forego opportunities to save for retirement, they increase the financial burden that they likely will impose one day upon their own children.

The total monetary value of unpaid work that family members perform in caring for the elderly far exceeds the amount that the U.S. spends on home health care and nursing home care. In short, the responsibility for caring for the country's aging population is overwhelmingly borne by working people. If families are unable to provide that care, then the aged have no choice but to just hurry up and die!

That cruel calculus makes perfect sense in terms of the functioning of the capitalist system. For the owners of banks and industry, government spending on caring for the aged is an unnecessary overhead expense that ultimately lowers the overall profit rate. As Karl Marx explained, profits derive from the *exploitation* of labor: Workers, who have to sell their labor power to survive, add value to what they produce, but they only get paid a sum that allows them to continue to toil and to raise a new generation of workers. The difference between the value added by the workers and what they actually get paid ends up in the capitalists' pockets in the form of surplus value. However, the aged and infirm do not labor and therefore do not generate surplus value. In the interest of maximizing profits, the engine that powers the capitalist system, public spending on the aged and disabled should logically be cut to the bone.

Minnesota Historical Society

Social Security Administration

**Left: Unionists battle cops during 1934 Minneapolis Teamsters Strike.
Above: Roosevelt signs Social Security Act, August 1935.**

Those welfare programs that exist have been achieved as a result of mass social struggles. In 1934, the year before the passage of the Social Security Act, there were three victorious citywide organizing strikes: one led by Communists in San Francisco, the Trotskyist-led Minneapolis Teamsters strikes and a general strike led by left-wing socialists in Toledo. In fact, Social Security and other New Deal programs were part of an effort by the bourgeoisie to head off growing leftist political radicalization and the burgeoning labor struggles in the 1930s. Medicare as well as Medicaid and other "war on poverty" programs were enacted to buy social peace during the turbulent 1960s, a period marked by the civil rights upsurge and the Vietnam antiwar movement.

In the U.S., every president since Ronald Reagan has trimmed spending on Medicare, the federal health insurance program for those aged 65 and older as well as younger people with disabilities. The slashing of the social safety net—given added impetus by the capitalist counterrevolution that destroyed the Soviet Union in 1991-92—has been accompanied by a vicious anti-union offensive. The dearth of strikes in recent decades has helped pave the way for the exploiters to butcher health care, pensions and other union gains with impunity. Free, quality medical care is today a burning need for the mass of the population. The labor movement would galvanize broad support if it were to take up this fight as part of a struggle for jobs and decent pensions for all.

To wage such battles poses the need to oust the pro-capitalist trade-union leaders, who peddle the lie that the workers have interests in common with their exploiters. They must be replaced with new leaders based on a program of class struggle in opposition to the capitalist class enemy and its political parties, the Democrats and Republicans. The two parties play a time-honored game of "hard cop, soft cop" in which the Republicans demand draconian cuts in social programs and the Democrats posture as friends of working people while implementing much the same austerity agenda as the Republicans. The working class needs its own party: a workers party that fights for a workers government, which would expropriate the productive wealth of the capitalist class and build and develop a planned economy.

Getty

72-year-old checkout clerk at Ohio Wal-Mart, 2006.

Discarding Those They Cannot Exploit

The responsibility of caring for the older generation in this country has always fallen primarily on younger family members. In the overwhelmingly rural America of the 18th and early 19th centuries, when extended families tended to live in close proximity and women did not work outside the home, kinship networks were in some ways better equipped than today's families to handle such care. In addition, elder care then was typically less onerous. Before the development of antibiotics in the mid 20th century, the aged often died precipitately of infectious diseases rather than suffering for extended periods with debilitating or chronic illness as is now common.

Urban and industrial growth increasingly undermined the ability of families to care for the elderly, not least because urban families were smaller than rural ones. Yet even as families were finding it more difficult to cope with elder care, the ruling class had not the slightest intention of taking on that role. Throughout the 19th century, state and local governments maintained some bare-bones assistance (termed "outdoor relief") for the impoverished in the interest of social stability. As one historian explained, "The poor were seen as a threat to civil order, and those in a position of authority sought an effective way of relieving (and calming) them" (Thomas Streissguth, *Welfare and Welfare Reform* [2009]).

Except for the favored few who received some financial assistance, the policy for those elderly who had no family to provide support was so-called "indoor relief": They were simply locked up in poorhouses. These dreadful institutions were direct descendants of the English workhouses that had existed since the 16th century essentially to punish the poor for their lamentable state. Far from seeking to ameliorate the condition of the infirm and disabled, the purpose of institutionalizing them was to isolate them and remove them from view. The American bourgeoisie of the 19th and early 20th centuries subjected the most needy of the elderly population to inhuman, prison-like conditions: overcrowded cells swarming with vermin, noxious air that was often barely breathable, rampant disease.

By the mid 19th century, scores of Protestant evangelical and other reform societies had set up charities to enable those who could become productive members of society (and lead virtuous Christian lives) to escape the corrupt influence of the poorhouse. Often, the aged—who, it was assumed, could no longer be productive—were specifically excluded from these uplifting endeavors. The New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor piously resolved "to give no aid to persons who, from infirmity, imbecility, old age, or any other cause, are likely to continue unable to earn their own support" (quoted in Carole Haber, *Beyond Sixty-Five: The Dilemma of Old Age in America's Past* [1983]).

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By the late 19th century, sectors of the poorhouse population were increasingly transferred to newly created, specialized institutions—orphans to orphanages, the insane to insane asylums and the homeless to flophouses. The poorhouses were essentially transformed into "homes for the aged and infirm," as many began calling themselves. By the early 1920s, more than 70 percent of the country's poorhouse inmates were over the age of 55, and most were seriously disabled.

With the passage of the Social Security Act, the bourgeoisie seized the opportunity to do away with the poorhouses, the Dickensian horrors of which had become a national embarrassment. No less important to the Franklin Roosevelt administration was the argument that a system of small pensions would be a cheaper way of providing minimal elder care than maintaining the poorhouses, which were swarming with victims of the Great Depression. Thus, the law prohibited Social Security payments to the elderly inmates of public institutions. Almost overnight, a new industry was born as the direct legacy of the poorhouses: privately owned, for-profit nursing homes.

Cooke/Time Life

Residents of poorhouse in Fort Wayne, Indiana, line up for meal, 1949.

The Nursing Home Pestilence

Providing professional care for elderly people in this country is big business, and it will become even bigger with the baby-boomer generation entering retirement age. At the center of that business are for-profit nursing homes, often run by giant corporations. As is true of all capitalist enterprises, nursing homes must drive down expenses in the pursuit of profits. Many nursing homes avoid admitting elderly patients who are afflicted with dementia or other chronic diseases—precisely those who need care the most—due to the high cost of looking after them.

Likewise, nursing homes minimize the number of registered nurses employed, almost never hire on-staff doctors and pay the direct-care staff (almost always non-unionized) a wage they could earn at McDonald's. Often, even in the better nursing homes, there is not enough staff to ensure that residents are properly fed. What they do not stint on are tranquilizers and other drugs that allow them to cut corners in attending to residents. As one academic researcher told the *New York Times* (23 September 2007), nursing home chains "have made a lot of money by cutting nurses, but it's at the cost of human lives."

This also exacts a toll on the remaining nurses and other staff. Nursing homes are stress-filled, physically demanding workplaces where non-fatal injury rates are greater than in the construction, meatpacking and mining industries. Inadequate training and equipment, higher patient loads and mandatory overtime feed the problem. Nursing home workers, who are predominantly women, need to be organized into the trade unions that represent nurses and other health care workers. Backed by the industrial unions, whose role in production gives them far greater potential social power, this fight must be part of a broader campaign to organize all the unorganized, a struggle that is crucial to reversing the decades of attacks on labor.

With employers taking aim at wages, benefits and working conditions, unionized nursing home workers have engaged in several strikes in recent years. One involving 600 workers at five Connecticut nursing homes operated by HealthBridge began last summer after the bosses froze pensions and imposed other takebacks. The company responded to the strike with naked union-busting: Scabs were brought in as permanent replacements and a RICO lawsuit was filed claiming that the activities of the union, which is affiliated with the SEIU 1199 service workers, amounted to "a shake-down by a lawless enterprise." On March 3, union members returned to the job, three months after a federal judge ordered management to take them back under the terms of their existing contract. Following in the footsteps of many other businesses attempting to void labor contracts, the five HealthBridge nursing homes have filed for bankruptcy.

The struggle for decent wages and working conditions is directly linked to the quality of care. For decades, Congressional committees, journalists and academic researchers have documented the indifference, abuse and outright cruelty of the nursing-home owners toward residents. As a result, the industry is one of the most regulated in the country. Yet nursing homes that provide low-quality care or mistreat their residents face no real consequences because Congress is not about to appropriate the funds for the necessary inspections or to pursue sanctions against those that are non-compliant. Families that try to bring wrongful death lawsuits in egregious cases of neglect are often stymied by a complex web of corporate ownership put in place to shield nursing-home operators from legal responsibility.

Even a generation ago, when defined-benefit pension plans were included in many union contracts, the exorbitant cost of quality nursing homes put them largely out of reach of the working class. Nationally, the average cost of a semi-private (shared) room in a nursing home is today almost $75,000 per year—in New York, it is over $120,000. The elderly will typically soon exhaust their life savings paying for care and, once they are indigent, apply for meager government assistance under Medicaid.

As is true throughout the U.S. health care system, there is a two-class system of nursing homes in which the well-to-do get near-adequate (sometimes even high-quality) care while everyone else receives outrageously dreadful treatment. Many nursing homes will only accept residents who can afford to pay the cost and shun those who are on Medicaid, which typically pays about 30 percent less than what residents would pay out-of-pocket for the same care.

Low-budget nursing homes that cater to impoverished Medicaid recipients, especially those located in poor black and Hispanic communities, are often simply foul-smelling hellholes. According to a 2005 study by the U.S. Government Accountability Office, at least one in six nursing homes provides such poor care that residents are at risk of physical harm. Such conditions often persist despite the best efforts of health care workers, who seek to provide quality care in defiance of the rapacious nursing-home bosses. In the case of Hurricane Sandy, it was the staff, often putting in 36-hour shifts, that carried out the emergency evacuations of dozens of stricken New York City nursing homes. There was no good reason why people could not have been evacuated in an orderly fashion before the storm hit. It was penny-pinching by Mayor Michael Bloomberg that left the elderly in harm's way.

Under capitalism, nursing homes hardly even begin to address the social need for elder care. Only about one person in eight aged 85 or over is placed in a nursing home. Of course, many prefer staying with their families, especially with what is on offer at most old-age facilities. The whole setup is focused on profiteering. By raking in about $160 billion per year while holding down costs, private nursing homes have been quite successful in maximizing their shareholders' return on investment. This industry provides an object lesson in how the capitalist system is incompatible with satisfying basic human needs.

AP

December 2012: Nursing home workers in Newington, Connecticut, on strike against HealthBridge corporation.

For Socialized Elder Care!

In the early 19th century, the utopian socialist Charles Fourier observed that the status of women serves as a hallmark of overall emancipation in any society. A not-unrelated hallmark is how society treats its elderly and disabled. The prize-winning 1983 film *The Ballad of Narayama* depicts a primitive 19th-century Japanese village so impoverished that the elderly were expected to die voluntarily so that a new generation could survive. Amid brutal images of near-starvation, the film contrasts the dignity of the protagonist's ascent of Mt. Narayama to die there of exposure.

In capitalist America, that contrast is cruelly inverted. Modern industrial society is fully capable of providing quality health care for all, including for the aged, disabled and chronically ill. Yet the bourgeoisie's treatment of the elderly population denies many—especially working people, minorities and the poor—even basic human dignity. In a study published last October, *Home Alone: Family Caregivers Providing Complex Chronic Care*, the AARP and the non-profit United Hospital Fund offered "recommendations for action" that are premised on younger family members' responsibility for long-term care of the elderly. The study simply lists various ways that "family caregivers" could be provided with additional "training and support." And no politicians in Washington are offering anything remotely resembling an improvement in the conditions of the elderly.

We have written extensively about the Marxist program of replacing the institution of the family—the main source of women's oppression under capitalism—with socialized childcare and housework. In "The Russian Revolution and the Emancipation of Women" (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 59, Spring 2006), we described how V.I. Lenin's Bolshevik Party, after leading the working class to power in Russia in 1917, sought to free women from the drudgery of housework by setting up communal childcare facilities, dining halls and laundries, as well as by introducing paid maternity leave and free health care. Such measures represent the concrete expression of our slogan: For women's liberation through socialist revolution!

Socialized elder care, like socialized childcare, would represent a significant step toward replacing the institution of the family. Yet elder care is fundamentally different from childcare in that it addresses a process of increasing, not decreasing, dependence. That calls for flexible institutional solutions corresponding to the successive stages of decline in old age. Different levels of group care for the aged, requiring increasing levels of medical supervision, would be necessary, from assisted living and nursing facilities to long-term hospitalization.

The aged in today's society overwhelmingly wish to remain in their homes as long as possible. A workers state would establish communal facilities attractive to the aged who require care. The needs of the aged who remain attached to their homes could, through state support, be largely met in the same way as for the rich today: by bringing nursing services into their homes on a daily basis. A wide-ranging effort would be undertaken to provide housing, transportation, custodial care and the many other needs of older people that working families today attempt to meet.

We Marxists are for socialized medicine—the expropriation of the pharmaceutical, health care and insurance companies, including the parasitic private nursing home industry—as part of the fight for a workers government. To this end, a workers party is needed to lead the proletariat in the fight to overturn the capitalist order through socialist revolution, ushering in a society based on production for need, not for profit. A rational, internationally planned economy would lay the basis for a qualitative development of the productive forces, opening the road to the elimination of poverty and the creation of an egalitarian socialist society. Based on material abundance, the future communist society would adopt the rule, as Karl Marx declared in his 1875 "Critique of the Gotha Program": "From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs!" ■

New Issue of *Black History and the Class Struggle*

The following article was written by our comrades of Spartacist/South Africa, Section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) as the Introduction to the new issue of Black History and the Class Struggle *(No. 23, February 2013). We have not included references to articles contained in the pamphlet.*

28 JANUARY—The 16 August 2012 massacre of 34 striking Lonmin platinum miners at Marikana was the worst instance of lethal police violence in response to struggle since the end of white-supremacist apartheid rule in 1994. Carried out under the bourgeois Tripartite Alliance government led by the African National Congress (ANC), this massacre was meant to be a bloody warning to those amongst the oppressed who dare to stand up against their miserable conditions of existence. But the plan backfired as the police slaughter fuelled a wave of wildcat strikes across the industry and beyond, shaking the fragile foundations of neo-apartheid capitalism. The miners, who had been making as little as 4,000 rand per month (US$440), demanded a R12,500 minimum wage. After they won most of that amount for the majority of Lonmin workers, that demand became the battle cry for many other workers who are sick and tired of waiting for the promised better life for all.

The massacre and the strike wave it spurred ripped a huge tear in the fabric of this society. There is wide and deep discontent at the pace of change over the nearly 20 years of rule by the Tripartite Alliance—the ANC, South African Communist Party (SACP) and Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) misleaders, along with the COSATU bureaucracy as a whole, acted as strikebreakers at Lonmin and at other "illegal" strikes, helping spur the growth of the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU). The ferment and political volatility in the mines have not dissipated, as the causes of last year's strikes centring on starvation wages and terrible conditions of employment remain unresolved. This is likely to be a lightning rod for more struggles ahead.

Like atrocities in the last days of the apartheid era, the Lonmin massacre failed to break the fighting spirit of the striking workers. But militancy on the trade-union level is not capable in and of itself of breaking the overwhelmingly black working class from bourgeois consciousness, which in South Africa is mainly expressed through the politics of nationalism. The rise of powerful trade unions of black workers in the 1980s was a factor in bringing an end to the apartheid regime, but the leadership of the SACP and the emerging COSATU union federation derailed any fight for workers rule by selling the lie that the ANC and its partners are the leaders in the fight for national liberation. A revolutionary leadership is required to break the hold of such deadly illusions among the combative proletariat.

So long as capitalism remains in power, a decent life for the masses can never be won and any gains secured by class struggle remain highly reversible. Nor is there any genuine solution to the masses' entrenched poverty within the confines of South Africa. Mainly owned by British and U.S. capital, this country's mining industry—the core of the economy—is subject to the ebbs and flows of the imperialist-dominated world market. Indeed, the economic position of the platinum miners has been undermined by the narrowing of the market for this metal, whose main use is in auto production, due to the ongoing world capitalist contraction. Such facts underscore that the struggle of the working class against capital must be an international struggle reaching into the imperialist centres, which are themselves class-divided and multiracial societies.

Mine capitalists have started this year with a backlash, threatening to lay off tens of thousands of workers. In Carletonville, west of Johannesburg, Harmony Gold locked out its 6,000 mostly migrant workers returning from the holidays, closing hostels and forcing workers to sleep out in the open. Owners are demanding prior assurances that it would be "profitable and safe" to reopen the mine, in other words, workers should commit never to strike again. At Anglo American Platinum (Amplats), miners responded with strike action to the company's announcement that it would close down four shafts, threatening 14,000 jobs mainly in the Rustenburg area, centre of the platinum industry. The employer was forced to back off from its decision and agree to negotiate with workers' leaders. This confirms again that *class struggle* is the only reliable weapon in the hands of the working class. Later it was announced that management decided to delay the implementation of its plan.

The coldblooded murder of workers at Lonmin was the most horrific moment of the 2012 mining wildcat strike movement, which began in late January at Impala Platinum. The massacre showed, in blood, the absurdity of reformist arguments that the ANC/Alliance government is "class contested terrain." Those like the SACP misleaders and apologists who portray the Alliance as a "people's government" on the "peaceful road to socialism" are practicing deceit. It is a bourgeois government pledged to maintaining capitalist private property.

This is further shown by the regime's apartheid-style demolition of houses occupied mainly by black people in predominantly Indian Lenasia, south of Johannesburg, and by the ruthless attacks on recent strikes by farm workers in the Western Cape. Three of those workers have been killed by police and private security guards, and scores of others injured or arrested. Workers have reported police raids in the wee hours of the morning accompanied by beatings and random shootings, injuring women and children in their homes. The "new," "democratic" South African state is a direct continuity of the old apartheid.

The farm workers ignored authorities' attempts to play divide-and-rule among coloured [mixed-race, partly Malay-derived], black and immigrant workers. The workers maintained their unity and class integrity in struggle against their common class enemy to ameliorate their slave-like labour conditions. But instead of organising the powerful harbour, transport and other workers in solidarity with the farm workers, COSATU leaders have done everything in their power to stop the strikes. COSATU has historically neglected organising efforts among these isolated and miserably exploited workers, who make as little as R69 per day. To this day, only a small minority belong to unions. The R150-a-day minimum wage the workers have demanded is still far below what they need to survive.

Underlying the farm workers strikes is the burning issue of the land, a question which is at the centre of the dispossession of the non-white majority in this country. The white minority, which forms less than 10 percent of the population, owns more than 70 percent of urban and arable rural land. Most farming is done by large, mechanised and capital-intensive agribusiness employing agricultural proletarians. We are for the expropriation of the large, white-owned farms and for their transformation into collective and state farms under workers rule. Farm workers are going to be central in achieving this goal, which is indissolubly bound up with the socialist revolution to be led by the mainly urban proletariat.

Amid Rising Mass Anger, State Repression Intensifies

The explosive anger at the base of society has triggered an increase in the state's violent suppression of protest, further helping to peel away the democratic facade of the post-apartheid capitalist state. In January, police minister Nathi

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AP photos

Left: Anglo American platinum miners march in Rustenburg one day after company fired 12,000 strikers, October 2012. Right: Farm workers demand hike in miserable wages as strikes swept Western Cape, December 2012.

Outrage Over Grisly Cop Killing of Mozambican South Africa

Daily Sun

Reuters

The horrific killing of 27-year-old Mozambican taxi driver Mido Macia by cops in the Daveyton township outside Johannesburg on February 26 has sparked outrage in South Africa and beyond. The video still at left shows Macia shackled to the back of a police van. Charged with a parking violation, he was dragged hundreds of yards to the police station, where he died of head injuries and internal bleeding. "They killed one of our brothers like he was a dog," said one of those protesting the killing in Daveyton two days later (photo at right).

This gruesome killing by black cops shows yet again that the role of the police under the bourgeois African National Congress (ANC) is the same as under apartheid, when mainly white cops were notorious for such barbarity. With this latest atrocity exposed to the world, eight Daveyton cops have been charged with murder. But the same police commissioner, Riah Phiyega, who sheds crocodile tears over Mido Macia's killing told cops who slaughtered striking platinum miners in Marikana last August, "Don't be sorry about what happened." The ANC-led capitalist government has increasingly given the cops free rein against striking workers, immigrants and the township poor. As part of the struggle against police terror, class-conscious militants must demand: Cops, prison guards, security guards out of the unions!

Mthethwa announced that 704 people were arrested for "public violence" in December alone. Militants who take part in strikes or township protests demanding electricity, water and other basic services are viciously attacked by police, sometimes with live ammunition, and arrested. We demand the dropping of all charges and the immediate, unconditional freedom of those jailed for protesting against this racist, neo-apartheid capitalist hellhole. ***An injury to one is an injury to all!***

The organised working class must wield its social power on behalf of all the oppressed, particularly the desperate unemployed in the townships. In doing so, it must fight against anti-immigrant attacks, which are often fuelled by petty-bourgeois elements in the townships who see shopkeepers from Somalia, Pakistan or elsewhere as competitors. From the Rustenburg platinum mines to the Western Cape vineyards and orchards, recent strikes have shown a high degree of unity in struggle by South African and immigrant workers. Spartacist/South Africa and the ICL demand: ***Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!***

Recent proposed legislation attacking democratic rights includes the Protection of State Information Bill, which requires prior approval for the publication of material deemed sensitive by the state, and the Traditional Courts Bill. The latter gives traditional leaders, headed by tribal chiefs, unchallenged legal power over 17 million rural black inhabitants, who are balkanised according to tribal background. Chiefs would get enhanced legal authority for making laws, deciding cases and handing down punishment. The burden would be disproportionately felt by women, who are viciously oppressed by backward practices like *lobola* (bride price) and marriage-by-capture, a form of kidnapping. Under the bill, women would not be allowed to represent themselves but must be represented by their husbands or other male family members. The bill is a rehash of British colonial and later apartheid laws that, in relegating blacks to the bottom of society, designed a separate legal system enshrining the power of traditional leaders.

ANC at Mangaung: The Business of Running Capitalism

At the ANC's recent Mangaung national elective conference, Jacob Zuma convincingly defeated supporters of his deputy Kgalema Mothlante to retain the ANC presidency. The conference also confirmed the expulsion of the hypocrite populist and former ANC Youth League leader Julius Malema, who is himself a small-time capitalist. Spartacist/South Africa opposes all factions of this party of the class enemy. For the exploited and oppressed masses, whether Zuma or Mothlante won would have changed nothing.

For the first time, prominent COSATU leaders were included in the ANC's National Executive Committee (NEC), its highest decision-making body between conferences, where they will have to take direct responsibility for the policies of the capitalist government. This is what the COSATU and SACP leaders' perpetual call to "swell the ranks of the ANC" means. Since becoming president, Zuma has been careful to integrate SACP leaders into his government, in the process succeeding in silencing even their most superficial criticisms. Now he looks set to do the same with COSATU. Zwelinzima Vavi and Irvin Jim, leaders of COSATU and the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) respectively, who both declined nomination to the NEC, use the appearance of distance from the ANC hierarchy to occasionally mouth some criticisms of the government while in practice adhering to the entire programme of class collaboration.

Reinhardt Hartzenberg

SACP 90th anniversary dinner, Durban, 30 July 2011. From left to right: KwaZulu-Natal premier Mkhize, SACP chairman and ANC general secretary Mantashe, ANC president Zuma, SACP general secretary Nzimande, COSATU general secretary Vavi, COSATU president Dlamini.

The Mangaung conference also elected trade unionist-turned-billionaire-capitalist Cyril Ramaphosa as Zuma's second-in-command. While leading the NUM in the 1980s, Ramaphosa became the protégé of the head of the Oppenheimer family, the dominant owner of Anglo American, the country's leading mining company. He soon became the chief architect of the sellout deal that set the stage for the replacement of the apartheid government by the ANC-led Alliance. Today, among his many business concerns, Ramaphosa is a prominent shareholder at Lonmin. Just 24 hours before the killing of workers at Marikana, he sent e-mails to Lonmin management and police minister Mthethwa describing strike activities as being "plainly dastardly criminal" and calling for "concomitant action" to be taken.

Spartacist/South Africa and the ICL have been unique among leftists internationally for our consistent, principled political opposition to the ANC/SACP/COSATU nationalist popular front. This is in stark contrast to reformists like the Democratic Socialist Movement (DSM), which not only supported the ANC in the 1994 elections but joined this bourgeois party as a so-called Marxist Tendency.

Such fake-left organisations as the DSM, Keep Left! (supporters of the late Tony Cliff) and the Workers International Vanguard Party (formerly League) support the membership of cops and security guards in trade unions. COSATU includes the Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union (POPCRU) as well as cops organised by the SAMWU municipal workers and other unions, and the SACP recruits police into its own organisation. We oppose the inclusion of cops or security guards—the armed protectors of bourgeois rule and profits—in the unions and the broader working-class movement. After witnessing the wanton butchering of his comrades, and himself suffering torture in police custody, one Marikana striker said of the cops that "they are like dogs to me now.... I do not trust them anymore, they are like enemies" (*Marikana: A View from the Mountain and a Case to Answer*, 2012). The single experience of these workers has taught them more than the reformists have been capable of learning throughout their whole miserable history.

Talk about "democratic control of the police," "winning over the police" or "raising the consciousness of the police" has nothing to do with revolutionary Marxism and everything to do with reformism. As Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky argued repeatedly, there is no such thing as a class-neutral "democracy": the capitalist state is an apparatus of repression based on armed bodies of men—principally the army and the police—that protects the interests and property forms of the ruling class. The working class cannot simply lay hold of this state machinery and wield it for its own purposes. The capitalist state must be smashed through socialist revolution and replaced by a workers state.

The DSM intervened in the Rustenburg strikes to channel working-class militancy into bourgeois parliamentary reformist schemes. In December, the DSM announced the launch of the Workers and Socialist Party (WASP). The projected programme of this party is thoroughly reformist. The press release announcing it consists solely of bread-and-butter

continued on page 8

Spartacist League/SYC Forum

August 2012: Miners Strikes Shake Neo-Apartheid South Africa

- **Down With ANC/SACP/COSATU Capitalist Alliance!**
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Bus Strike...

(continued from page 3)

bus workers showed real audacity in going out on strike. But they lacked the social weight to defeat Bloomberg on their own. It was urgently necessary to mobilize the rest of New York City labor in defense of ATU Local 1181. The popularity of the strike among working parents indicated a real basis to do this. While Bloomberg wrapped his union-busting in "concern" for special-needs students, most every parent understands that seniority-based job protections mean that such students ride buses run safely for years by the same trusted union drivers and matrons. As one striking driver told *WV*, "We are their parents for a few hours each day."

We wrote at the outset of the strike: "With the city rulers putting the squeeze on working people throughout NYC, every public worker, every trade unionist and everyone who struggles to make ends meet has a stake in the outcome of the strike" ("Victory to NYC School Bus Workers Strike!" *WV* No. 1016, 25 January). Our article suggested:

> "A good step would be for other unions, beginning with Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100, the UFT [teachers] and Teamsters, to swell the ATU picket lines and help extend them to every depot gate. The school bus drivers and matrons have some 300,000 potential allies in city unions who are working without a contract or under a contract extension."

WV Photo

ATU school bus strikers marching from downtown Brooklyn to Manhattan's City Hall, February 10.

But the ATU tops sabotaged any such action. They even had their own union mechanics crossing picket lines to maintain buses. Never enforcing solid picket lines made it easy for the city's labor bureaucrats, who play a key role in the Democratic Party, to hang the bus workers out to dry. Buses driven by Teamsters and non-union drivers continued to roll right through picket lines during the strike. Scattered photo-op appearances by officers of Transport Workers Union Local 100 and small contingents of teachers and public school workers at a Sunday march across the Brooklyn Bridge were all the "solidarity" the city labor chiefs could muster.

Demoralized by their own union leaders, some bus workers wonder why they hit the picket lines in the first place and might question the need for a union at all. This is what the bosses want workers to think. Unions are the basic defense organization of the working class against the bosses. The problem is their miserable sell-out misleaders. If unions serve no purpose for the rank and file, then why are the capitalists so eager to destroy them? They know that union wages remain higher, union working conditions better and union jobs safer. Despite historically low union organization levels, it remains the case that many workers would give their eyeteeth to join one.

The class-collaborationist labor tops suck the fighting strength out of the unions by looking for allies in all the wrong places—particularly the labor boards, courts and politicians of the capitalist class enemy. In the course of labor's battles against the arrogant exploiters, a new leadership must be built, based on a program of class struggle and opposition to the capitalists' political parties and state agencies. ■

South Africa...

(continued from page 7)

economic demands with not even a reference to women's oppression, much less any call for socialist revolution. Instead, they peddle reformist schemes of cleaning up capitalist municipal governments by leading "a campaign for the recall of all incompetent and corrupt councillors to replace them with WASP representatives" (socialistworld.net, 20 December 2012). This programme is not that of the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky, which led the October Revolution of 1917, the only successful workers revolution in history, but of social-democratic gradualism in the spirit of the classic British Labour Party. Thus the DSM's British comrades claim that "socialism" will be introduced by nationalising industry through the mechanism of an "enabling bill" passed by the bourgeois Parliament.

A recent survey reporting on the deepening rift between the COSATU leaders and the rank and file states that a significant number of shop stewards want COSATU to leave the ANC and form a workers party, also expressing no confidence in the SACP. We encourage and welcome workers' desire for independence from the bourgeois ANC as the beginning of wisdom. But the key question is *what programme* such a workers party would be based on. Reformists push a "workers party" as a con game, seeking merely a vehicle to better pressure the capitalist rulers, or even administer the state on their behalf. We strive to forge a party that stands for proletarian class independence from, and opposition to, the bourgeois state and all its political parties and fights for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Class and Race in South Africa

Some worker militants who have broken from the NUM are calling for "nonpolitical" unions. While this is understandable given the history of betrayals by the NUM leaders allied to the ANC, it is impossible to divorce union struggle from political struggle. This is especially clear in a country like South Africa, where the superexploitation of mainly black labour is the living legacy of apartheid and centuries of colonial oppression.

In a 17 January press conference widely broadcast on TV, AMCU president Joseph Mathunjwa warned against "illegal, unprotected strikes," insisted that workers must follow prescribed arbitration procedures and called for government intervention to settle disputes at Amplats. This shows clearly that the AMCU leadership does not oppose the established procedures for class collaboration and views the world through the same lens as the rest of the trade-union bureaucrats.

Meanwhile, the class-collaborationist Democratic Left Front, which is tied to imperialist-funded "social movements," seeks to channel workers' anger into the dead-end of pressuring the Farlam Commission of Enquiry, which was established by the government to whitewash its crimes at Marikana and to let the outraged public blow off some steam. We reject the double standards of people who claim to support struggling miners while at the same time preaching illusions in the institutions of the government that mowed them down like wild animals.

Trade-union consciousness is completely inadequate for the tasks necessary for the emancipation of the non-white majority. Parallel to starvation wages, there are problems of vulnerable workers employed by labour brokers, poor black communities in urban areas and especially in the rural reserves, and impoverished coloured townships as well. It is crucial that militant workers and youth assimilate the history of the genuine communist movement. Lenin's Bolshevik Party was a steadfast champion of all struggles against oppression in the tsarist empire, the "prison house of peoples." The Bolsheviks fought against Great Russian chauvinism and for the liberation of oppressed peoples using the ***methods of proletarian class struggle***.

This Leninist understanding is all the more critical for South Africa, where class exploitation has always been integrally bound up with the national oppression of the non-white masses. In the mid 1930s, Leon Trotsky wrote to his followers in South Africa that in the event of a proletarian revolution there:

> "But it is entirely obvious that the predominant majority of the population, liberated from slavish dependence, will put a certain imprint on the state.
>
> "Insofar as a victorious revolution will radically change not only the relation between classes, but also between races, and will assure to the blacks that place in the state which corresponds to their numbers, insofar will *social* revolution in South Africa also have a *national* character."

AP

Neo-apartheid capitalism: Miners' shantytown near Rustenburg.

Our perspective for a black-centred workers government flows from this understanding of the *class content* of the struggle for the emancipation of the black majority. History shows that the petty-bourgeois and bourgeois nationalist leaders of struggles for national liberation, once in power, become the agents of the same imperialist overlords, oppressing their "own" people. The "national liberation" rulers killed Marikana workers to protect the profits of Lonmin, which is based in London, capital city of the British former colonial masters of South Africa.

To answer the crisis of unemployment, poverty and inequality plaguing this country, which no capitalist regime can solve, we turn to Trotsky's 1938 Transitional Programme, founding programme of the Fourth International. The programme puts forward transitional demands that provide a bridge from workers' current struggles and consciousness to the fight for workers power. These include the demand for a *sliding scale of wages*, which means that collective agreements should assure an automatic rise in wages in relation to the increase in prices of consumer goods. This is a burning issue in South Africa, where, in addition to skyrocketing food and fuel prices, the masses are faced with the Eskom electrical company's demand for annual 16 percent tariff hikes until the year 2018, as well as the threatened imposition of "e-tolling" on the highways.

To address unemployment, the trade unions should fight for a *sliding scale of working hours*, i.e., the division of work amongst available labour without the loss of pay. This would help to bind together the working class and the unemployed masses, who in South Africa are maintained mainly by workers who themselves make only starvation wages. The crying need for a massive public works programme—building affordable houses for the millions who need them, hospitals, schools, roads, etc.—would provide the jobs that apologists for the ANC-led regime say are nowhere to be found.

All these demands point to the need for a black-centred workers government that would expropriate the bourgeoisie as a class. With mining and banking dominated by finance capital based in London and New York, the fight for socialist revolution in South Africa is completely bound up with the struggle for workers power in the imperialist centres. Under a revolutionary leadership, workers who see the failure of capitalism to meet even the most basic human wants will be won to the understanding that the bourgeois order and its system of production for profit must be overthrown and replaced with a collectivised economy, where production is based on social need. This is the perspective of Spartacist/South Africa. Those who want to play a role in the emancipation of the workers and toilers should examine the revolutionary programme of the International Communist League. ■

Spartacist South Africa

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Spartacist Group Poland Protest Statement

Anti-Semitic Provocation in Warsaw

The following is translated from a February 2013 supplement of Platforma Spartakusowców, *published by our comrades of the Spartakusowska Grupa Polski.*

FEBRUARY 17—Many black-and-white posters portraying Adolf Hitler have been displayed on advertising columns in the center of Warsaw since at least late December. Hitler's image was brought back to Warsaw as "art." It is presented as an advertisement for Maurizio Cattelan's "exhibition," organized by the Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle in Warsaw, under the honorary patronage of the Italian Embassy and the City of Warsaw. A photo of Cattelan's wax figure of Hitler kneeling that was made in 2001 was used for the poster. Hitler's figure is "one of the major pieces" of the event and has been displayed since mid November at 14 Próżna Street, in a passage with a locked gate leading to the courtyard of a devastated prewar building in the former [Jewish] ghetto. The kneeling wax figure can be seen only from a distance, from behind, through a hole in the locked wooden gate. The figure has been described in the media as a "praying Hitler" supposedly asking for "forgiveness." One can read that Cattelan's installation was erected at the Próżna Street building as "an artistic commentary on the Catholic credo: what, in fact, does love your enemies mean?" (www.csw.art.pl, Maurizio Cattelan, AMEN).

Whatever the stated intentions of its creators, objectively the display of Hitler's wax figure and its portraits in Warsaw are an anti-Semitic provocation, serving as an icebreaker for Nazi terror. A good answer to this media garbage was given by a passerby walking on Próżna Street, quoted by the *Jerusalem Post* (26 December 2012). She wondered: "'Why did the artists decide to put a praying child here?'... When she heard that the 'child' was in fact Hitler, she said angrily: 'Hitler did not have the right to ask for forgiveness'."

Expressing typical Polish-nationalist insolence, the "exhibition" curator, Justyna Wesolowska, told a journalist from *Jewish News One* (a TV channel in Brussels, Belgium): "It is really rather funny. For me it's very positive that locally we are receiving only positive reactions" (www.jnl.tv, 4 January). They ignored the fact that in 2010 in Milano, Italy, an earlier version of the same poster with a kneeling wax Hitler, ostensibly advertising Catellan's exhibition, was banned. After days of debate, Milano's town hall decided to stop the posters from being distributed. The Jewish community welcomed the decision to ban the posters. "The ad wounds our sensitivity and that of many people, overriding the sarcastic message of Hitler begging forgiveness," said community leader Roberto Jarach (www.lagazzettadelmezzogiorno.it, 15 September 2010).

It is worth quoting a statement by the Simon Wiesenthal Center. It called the "intentional placement of the statue in the area in which tens of thousands of Jews were murdered and from which hundreds of thousands of Jews were deported to their death by the Nazi regime headed by Hitler, a senseless provocation which insults the memory of the Nazis' Jewish victims." Moreover, the "installation is a manifestation of a total lack of sensitivity to Nazi crimes in Poland, and especially those committed against Polish Jews. As far as the Jews were concerned, Hitler's only 'prayer' was that they be wiped off the face of the earth.... Thus a 'praying' Hitler purposely placed in the center of the area of the Warsaw Ghetto is a total distortion of the history of World War II and the Holocaust" (www.wiesenthal.com, 27 December 2012).

Another example of the insolence of Polish nationalists is a protest statement, posted on the right-wing Internet site *wPolityce.pl* (29 December 2012), which does not mention Jews at all! Titled "Taxpayer!... The Criminal Hitler Has Returned in Hundreds of Posters!", this statement displays photos of the poster with Hitler, photos of some stone plaques commemorating mainly the fallen soldiers of the [Polish nationalist] Home Army (AK) and a plaque commemorating the fallen Catholic victims of a Nazi concentration camp. They also criticize "playing with 'questions about the meaning of the Catholic credo'." As if the Catholic church had not collaborated with the Nazis, they lament: "As if that German criminal [Hitler] had anything in common with the Christian faith, as if he had not persecuted priests, both in Germany and also, on a much wider scale, in Poland and other occupied countries. As if his crimes hadn't come exactly from rejecting God, from the Germans perceiving themselves as supermen." The authors of that statement prefer to keep silent on the priest Jozef Tiso, who headed the fascist regime loyal to Hitler in neighboring Slovakia. Or on the support that the fascist dictator of Croatia, Ante Pavelic, got from the Vatican and the local Catholic church. Or on the support that many top priests in Germany and the Vatican, etc. gave to Hitler's crusade against godless "Jew-Communism," as expressed for instance in the slogan on German army belt buckles: "Gott mit uns!" (God with us!).

In fact, there is one thing the whole political spectrum of right-wing groups, including those running the city and national government, have in common: they are all happy to see Poland cleared of Jews. As they came to power during the capitalist counterrevolution led by Solidarność in 1989-90, many of them espoused anti-Semitism, along with national chauvinism and anti-woman Catholic bigotry. The capitalist counterrevolution in East Europe and the USSR opened up a long period of reaction, with annual fascist veterans' marches in Lvov, Riga, etc. In 1943, the leaders of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising looked to the Soviet Army as their potential liberator, and some participants looked to the socialist revolution in Europe as the only hope for the remaining Jews in East Europe. In fact, it was the Soviet Army that liberated the country from the Nazis. But socialist revolution was betrayed long before the war by the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy, with its doctrine of "socialism in one country." In 1948, these bureaucrats supported the creation of a capitalist Israel and Jewish emigration, and they periodically led anti-Semitic witchhunts at home. In Poland, the background for anti-Semitic witchhunts and pogroms was the traditional anti-Semitism of the dominant Catholic church. Such anti-Semitism hasn't disappeared.

As revolutionary Marxists, we do not look to the capitalist state or local authorities to ban Nazi propaganda. Such bans are always primarily directed against the workers movement. Thus we opposed the recent legal ban of media featuring "fascist, communist or other totalitarian symbolism"—a ban that lasted from 8 June 2010 to 3 August 2011 (see "Down With Anti-Communist Law in Poland!" *WV* No. 958, 7 May 2010). It is in the interest of the working class to act against Nazi provocations, since the ultimate target of fascist terror is the organized working class. What is needed are mobilizations of organized workers leading all the oppressed minorities—Jews, Roma, homosexuals—and other intended victims of Nazi terror. We need to build Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard parties to lead future October Revolutions that would overturn the genocidal capitalist order, build a new society of workers democracy based on a planned economy and fully avenge the victims of the Nazi Holocaust in Germany, Poland and other countries. ***Down with the anti-Semitic provocation of "praying Hitler" in Warsaw!*** ■

ILWU...

(continued from page 3)

> sure: playing by the bosses' laws is a losing game. The whole reason these laws exist is to outlaw labor from mobilizing its social power based on its collective strength to stop the flow of goods and shut down production. But this truth is obfuscated by the bureaucrats. Instead, they have whipped up fear that if the union goes on strike, the law would permit the companies to permanently hire the scabs. By these lights, it is better to accept a company lockout that supposedly precludes such a union-busting outcome. "It's not the bosses' laws, but the relative strength and determination of the opposing forces that decide who wins and who loses in any strike, as in any conflict. By working the rejected contract terms, the ILWU is creating 'facts on the ground' that will be harder to reverse."

The whole aim of the Vancouver lockout is to force the union to sign on to the concessions in that contract or be busted. Indeed, the spokesman for the Pacific Northwest Grain Handlers Association is gloating that the number of managers and other scabs used to work the first ship shows that the task can be done with fewer workers than the longshore union dispatched under their previous contract. Now the ILWU International is pleading with the grain bosses to return to the bargaining table. A letter from Leal Sundet, co-chair of the union's grain negotiating team, pointed to the TEMCO agreement as evidence of "the union's commitment to reaching a deal that maintains American industry standards and working conditions while addressing the concerns that elevator operators bring to the table."

ILWU International president Robert McEllrath (whose home local is Local 4) promoted the union's deal with TEMCO as having been "achieved because American companies, farmers and workers recognize a common interest in our country's resources and economic well being. That common interest is not reflected in the grain companies that have unilaterally implemented a contract that undermines American working standards at their competing facilities." The ILWU tops' chauvinist appeals to the union's "common interests" with the U.S.-based grain bosses against their foreign-owned competitors are deadly dangerous for workers. Such expressions of red-white-and-blue patriotism shackle the interests of the union to the profitability of American imperialism and are poison to the struggle of workers around the globe against their common class enemies.

International labor solidarity is especially vital to longshore workers, whose very jobs depend on world trade. A January press release from the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) reported on the solidarity with the ILWU expressed by members of the Japanese Seamen's Union crewing a grain ship at the United Grain terminal in Vancouver: "As union members themselves, who are among 4.5 million workers united as affiliates of the ITF, they knew the players involved as well as the high stakes for workers." Imagine if the Japanese Seamen's Union had declared that its interests lay in defending the Mitsui owners of United Grain in order to advance the "economic well being" of Japanese imperialism!

The world's grain supply is controlled by a handful of agribusiness giants, including U.S.-based TEMCO. Their profits are secured through driving up food prices worldwide at the human cost of the starvation and death of millions across the globe. At home, they are purchased through jacking up the exploitation of the working class, which is why all of the grain companies are out to break the back of the ILWU. What the grain bosses get away with will set the stage for the shipping bosses of the Pacific Maritime Association, whose contract with the ILWU is up in 2014.

Two roads lie before the ILWU. There is the bureaucrats' promotion of the lie of a partnership between labor and capital, which has seriously undermined the union's strength and now threatens its potential destruction as an industrial union. Or there is the class-struggle road of mobilizing the power of the working class in necessary battles against the capitalist class enemy. It is in the crucible of such struggle that a new leadership of the unions will be forged. This is not simply a question of militancy but of a leadership that will arm the working class with a revolutionary understanding of the nature of capitalist society and of its own power and historic interests as a class fighting for itself and all the oppressed. That struggle requires a political expression—a revolutionary workers party whose purpose is not simply to defend the working class against the scourge of its own devastation but to rid the planet of the source of that devastation, capitalism itself, and the state power that preserves it. ■

Spartacus Youth Club Events

BAY AREA

Wednesday, March 13, 7:30 p.m.

– FORUM –
Forty Years Since *Roe v. Wade*
Capitalism's War on Women's Rights
For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

San Francisco State University
HSS Building, Room 304
(near corner of 19th Ave. & Holloway Ave.)
Information: (510) 839-0851
sycbayarea@sbcglobal.net

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Tuesday, March 19, 7 p.m.

The Russian Revolution of 1917: From the February Revolution to the July Days

CCNY, NAC Room 1/211
138th St. and Amsterdam Ave.
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For Free Abortion on Demand!
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University of Toronto
Sidney Smith Hall, Room 2115
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Information and readings: (416) 593-4138
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Mexico...

(continued from page 12)

Porfirio Díaz, ousted by the Mexican Revolution in 1911]. The state intends to use brutal repression to maintain "order" in the face of the misery caused by "labor deregulation," the "opening up of the economy" and urban and rural poverty. To make this even clearer, Peña Nieto announced in December that a central feature of his new security strategy is the creation of a national gendarmerie. According to Spanish newspaper *El País* (18 December 2012), this will be "modeled on the Spanish Guardia Civil," the brutal militarized police dating from the Franco dictatorship that is regularly deployed against demonstrators, leftists, unionists and Basque and Catalan nationalists. Although Peña Nieto hypocritically claims that, at some unknown time in the future, he will withdraw the army from the streets, his new "strategy" boils down to permanent, large-scale militarization and renewed repression against the populace as a whole, directed in particular against social and union activists.

As we have stressed in the past, the aim of the Mexican rulers' "war on drugs" is to strengthen the repressive powers of the capitalist state. We call for the decriminalization of drugs. Decriminalization would

ESPARTACO

reduce crime and other social pathologies associated with drug trafficking by eliminating the enormous profits that stem from its illegal and underground nature. We also oppose measures by the bourgeois state to restrict or forbid people from bearing arms, which impinges on their rights and guarantees that criminals and the state maintain a monopoly on weapons (see "Bourgeois Hypocrisy and Gun Control Schemes," *WV* No. 1015, 11 January).

The Mexican capitalists and their government are bent on making workers pay the price for the international economic crisis. In carrying out their new campaign, the bosses feel encouraged by the lack of response from the powerful unions in the country, whose leaders tail either the PRI, the PRD or, more recently, Morena [Movement for National Regeneration, led by former PRD presidential candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador, known as AMLO]. All of these are bourgeois parties. From the murderous repression of the popular movement in Oaxaca in 2006 to the destruction of the SME [electrical workers union] in 2009 and the 2012 labor reform, the pro-PRD union tops, not to mention their pro-PRI counterparts and the SNTE, essentially have not lifted a finger to stop the attacks that have destroyed what remained of labor's gains.

Down With the "Education Reform"!

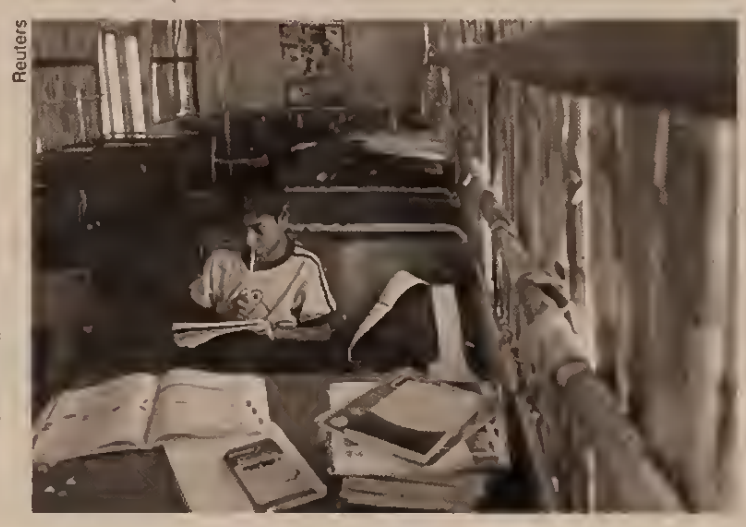
A new target of the bosses' offensive, this time in the form of "education reform," is the SNTE—the biggest union in Latin America, with over a million members. By broadening the provisions of the "Alliance for Quality Education" signed by the government and the SNTE leadership itself in 2008, the current reform would impose continual evaluations of teachers. It would do away with permanent positions by linking employment and promotion of teachers to those evaluations and would also eliminate union control over hiring.

Brown Brothers

Charles Reginald

1907 strike by Rio Blanco textile workers. Four years later, dictator Porfirio Diaz (above) was overthrown during opening phase of Mexican Revolution.

Under capitalism, education is based on the needs of the ruling class and reflects the racist and class-divided nature of society. The bourgeois rulers allocate resources to education only to the extent that this serves their purpose in training the future technical, administrative and ideological personnel needed to run capitalist society. Beyond that, they couldn't care less about the education of the masses of exploited and oppressed people, particularly poor and indigenous peasants.



Reuters

Mexican boy sits in an old bus converted to a schoolroom in village of Pueblo Nuevo, Oaxaca, September 2009.

While urban public schools present a pitiful image, rural ones are much worse. Given the lack of supplies, furniture and often even buildings, it is not uncommon for teachers to give classes to malnourished children in the open air. As far as indigenous children and teenagers go, even when their teachers speak their language, books in languages other than Spanish are almost nonexistent. For the right of indigenous peoples to receive education in their own languages! No privileges for any language! As communists, we fight for free, quality education for *all*—in the cities and the countryside. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to put an end to the bourgeois system of exploitation—dedicated to enriching a handful of capitalists—through a socialist revolution that expropriates the bourgeoisie and establishes a collectivized, planned economy to satisfy the needs of the population.

It is typical of the bourgeoisie to blame the workers for the shortcomings of public services when the fundamental problem is lack of resources. The lie goes: If they really cared about what they do and about the well-being of the population, nurses, for example, would somehow overcome the shortage of beds, supplies and medicines. Similarly, it is claimed that if a teacher really wanted to teach, he or she could do so without desks, books or other supplies, let alone computers. This comes on top of a propaganda campaign launched by the government and the bourgeoisie to depict SNTE teachers as a "privileged" group on account of the few benefits that they still enjoy. Like many others, the CNN Expansión (11 September 2012) Web site concludes: "Teachers Wages Exhaust Budget." This is simply an insult to teachers at public elementary and junior high schools, who start off with a salary of about 8,000 pesos [$600] a month *if they have a permanent position*—that's what they call "privileged." Without a permanent position, teachers earn a starvation salary depending on the hours they teach.

The bourgeois nationalists of the PRD and Morena have no qualms about laying bare the true purpose of the "education reform." Jesús Zambrano, leader of the PRD—a party that supports the "reform"—claimed that the union "clique" became "the main obstacle to improving the quality of education and an obstacle to democratic development in general and inside the unions in particular." Meanwhile, Morena, while purporting to oppose the reform, complains that it is not forceful enough against the union. Martí Batres, a Morena leader, ranted in December that the reform was nothing more than a media "trick" to give the impression of attacking the union leadership. According to him, "the SNTE is not affected by the education reform, because it doesn't touch their leadership or their financing" (Aristegui Noticias Web site, undated).

We oppose this reform as an attack on the SNTE, on the gains obtained by the teachers and on free public education. [Now-deposed SNTE leader] Elba Esther Gordillo, a/k/a "La Maestra," is accustomed to working hand in hand with the capitalist state to carry out murderous attacks against dissident CNTE teachers, such as when she supported the fierce repression in 2006 against Section [Local] 22 in Oaxaca. She now finds herself in the crosshairs of her former allies [see article on page 12]. What must be clear, however, is that the intervention of the capitalist state in the unions has nothing to do with "democratization." Its purpose is to further tie up the unions, if not to destroy them outright, and wipe away any remaining union benefits. The workers movement must clean its own house: the brutal and groveling pro-boss bureaucracy led by "La Maestra" must be expelled from the union leadership by the organized teachers themselves.

Historically, teachers have been very militant, constituting an important link between the urban proletariat and the peasantry. However, despite being organized in unions that are part of the workers movement, teachers do not have a direct relationship to the means of production and thus lack social power. (Like other professionals they are part of the intelligentsia, a sector of the petty bourgeoisie.) Teachers need the concrete solidarity of the sections of the industrial proletariat that do have social weight. The working class must flex its muscles against the bosses' new attacks, against the education and labor reforms.

Like the rest of the supposedly "independent" unions, the dissident teachers organized in the CNTE, which for decades has fought to "democratize" the SNTE in opposition to the venal national leadership, have always been subordinated to the PRD/Morena. These politics can only lead to defeat and never to true union democracy. It is revealing that the leadership of the SNTE and the

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CNTE (as well as Morena) are taking the same actions to oppose the "education reform": appealing to the capitalist courts for protection against the government. In fact, the CNTE accused the SNTE leadership of "'ripping off' their strategies and slogans" (*La Jornada*, 12 January). To unleash the social power of the working class it is necessary to fight for a class-struggle union leadership. The starting point is fighting for the political independence of the workers movement, which in the concrete means breaking from bourgeois nationalism and any illusions in the PRD, AMLO and Morena.

Oil, Populism and Imperialism

The new "structural reforms" explicitly aim at further opening up the economy for the imperialists, particularly the U.S. imperialists, who are the true masters of the weak Mexican bourgeoisie. The main offering is PEMEX, the core of what remains of nationalized industry and the main source of wealth in the country. Just as Leon Trotsky, co-leader with Lenin of the 1917 Russian Revolution, defended the expropriation of U.S. and British oil companies [in Mexico] in 1938, we defend the nationalized energy industry as a measure of self-defense on the part of semicolonial Mexico against imperialism.

Bourgeois populists such as AMLO promote the now widespread notion that PEMEX belongs to "the people" or "the nation." The truth is that PEMEX really belongs to the bourgeoisie, and the Mexican capitalists are divided on how to better profit from the enormous wealth produced by oil. Regardless of what they do with PEMEX, regardless of who rules and under what program, capitalist Mexico will remain a backward oil producer that is subordinated to imperialism and subject to market crises and the wild fluctuation of oil prices.

In all countries of belated capitalist development, the national bourgeoisies are utterly incapable of breaking with imperialism. Unlike populism and neoliberalism, imperialism is *not* a disposable, conjunctural policy but a global system of exploitation and oppression. This system is dominated by large financial monopolies, backed by the armies and fleets of their respective nation-states, which long ago divided up the world between them and today keep the backward countries in their grip. Within the framework of capitalism, it is impossible to reach a level of industrial development comparable to that of advanced countries. In *The Permanent Revolution* [1930], Leon Trotsky explained:

> "With regard to countries with a belated bourgeois development, especially the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the theory of the permanent revolution signifies that the complete and genuine solution of their tasks of achieving ***democracy and national emancipation*** is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat as the leader of the subjugated nation, above all of its peasant masses."

Upon taking power, the proletariat cannot stop at the democratic tasks but must immediately continue with the socialist tasks (expropriation of the bourgeoisie as a class, i.e., collectivization and economic planning) and fight for the international extension of the revolution. This is the only way to guarantee that the heartfelt democratic aspirations of the masses, such as national emancipation, political democracy and agrarian revolution, are fulfilled. ***For a workers and peasants government!***

Zapatismo vs. Permanent Revolution

The return of the PRI to the presidential residence sparked the largest EZLN [Zapatista] mobilization since this movement burst onto the scene in 1994. The indigenous Zapatista peasants marched in silence through several towns of Chiapas on December 21, simply to show that they are still there. For 19 years, the Zapatistas have endured government attacks as they struggle against rural poverty and racist, anti-indigenous oppression. We defend the EZLN against capitalist state repression while pointing out that this petty-bourgeois peasant organization is incapable of offering a solution to the demands of the peasantry and the indigenous population. After several years of silence, "Subcomandante" Marcos issued new communiqués some days after the demonstration. In one of them, the EZLN correctly denounces the repression carried out by all the bourgeois parties. At the same time, the communiqué demands compliance with the "San Andrés Accords" [1996 "autonomy" agreement between EZLN and the government], promises to build "the necessary bridges towards social movements" and reaffirms its 2006 "Sixth Declaration."

The EZLN lost a substantial portion of its support in 2006 after it distanced itself from the PRD, at a time when AMLO's popularity was at its peak. Ever since, much of the criticism directed at the EZLN from its former supporters has come from the right (see *Espartaco* No. 25, Spring 2006). In truth, the EZLN simply offers a peasant variant of the bourgeois populism promoted by the PRD/Morena. The most prominent demand in the "Sixth Declaration" was for a new constitution that "recognizes the rights and liberties of the people and defends the weak before the powerful" and that would be imposed by a "civilian, peaceful movement."

It is utopian to think that the capitalist regime can be reformed to serve the exploited and the oppressed, whether through new legislation or by any other means. As we wrote then, in spite of its criticism of the PRD (and now Morena), the Zapatista movement is "a politically amorphous petty-bourgeois movement whose purpose is to pressure the nationalist bourgeoisie. It leads those breaking from the PRD to the left to remain within the limits of bourgeois politics" (see "Zapatista 'Sixth Declaration': Petty-Bourgeois Populism," *WV* No. 872, 9 June 2006).

AP

December 21: Protesters in Chiapas march with EZLN and Mexican flags in commemoration of massacre of Zapatista villagers.

The peasantry is a heterogeneous, petty-bourgeois stratum. Poor peasants are reduced to producing for their own consumption and aspire to have their own plot of land. Peasants who own small farms compete among themselves to place their produce on the market. The objective interests of the peasantry as a social stratum reside in private property of land. Because of these characteristics, the peasantry—and the petty bourgeoisie as a whole—is incapable of formulating its own revolutionary program. It always trails behind one of the two fundamental classes in capitalist society: the proletariat or the bourgeoisie. In the absence of a revolutionary workers party waging a struggle for power, peasant struggle today is limited to the framework of capitalism.

After 19 years, the politics of the Zapatistas confirm and reinforce this Marxist analysis. "Subcomandante" Marcos's new communiqué makes assertions such as, "Our standard of living is higher than that of the indigenous communities that support the governments in office and who receive handouts that they squander on alcohol and useless items." This is a grotesque and moralistic statement that stigmatizes, at least by default, the non-Zapatista indigenous communities (those who fail to appreciate Marcos's charm) as government acolytes, beggars and irresponsible people for wanting to enjoy a few pleasures, perhaps a drink.

Marcos also writes about how Zapatista housing "improves things without damaging nature by imposing roads alien to it." The idealization of isolated and technologically backward agrarian communities may be popular among a sector of the "green" petty bourgeoisie that does not have to endure the daily consequences. But the poor peasants and the exploited and oppressed of the world have no interest in adopting that perspective. We fight against the isolation of the countryside and for a world where everyone can benefit from advances in technology, culture and all other endeavors.

Furthermore, the demand for autonomy for indigenous communities is utopian under capitalism, as it would imply a long-term agreement between the indigenous communities and the capitalist government. The proposed autonomous regions, with limited rights over the land, would frequently find themselves at odds with landowners and potentially with industrial corporations. This is particularly the case in Chiapas, which has 30 percent of Mexico's scarce water supply, 47 percent of its natural gas reserves and 21 percent of its oil. Only a workers and peasants government—the dictatorship of the proletariat supported by the peasantry—can provide and guarantee true autonomy for the indigenous communities as part of a conscious and planned effort to eliminate the age-old rural destitution and the divide between the countryside and the city.

As communists, we fight for the complete eradication of poverty and for a society based on generalized abundance. Only a socialist revolution and its international extension can bring about ***this*** perspective, by establishing an international planned economy that puts the immense resources and productive forces developed under capitalism at the service of the exploited and oppressed of the world. The working class, because of its relationship to the means of production, is the ***only*** class with the historic interest and the social power to lead the oppressed masses to that end. We seek to build a revolutionary alliance between the proletariat and the poor peasantry, but this can only be done under the leadership of the workers' vanguard organized in a communist party. Thus, our purpose is to build a workers party like that of Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks, capable of leading the working class in this historic task. ■

Teachers...

(continued from page 12)

For its part, the National Coordination of Education Workers (CNTE), the pro-PRD opposition in the SNTE, criticizes the *Elbazo* [the ousting of Gordillo] as too partial. For the CNTE, Gordillo's jailing is "a 'settling of scores' that will have no effect on union transparency and democracy, because in any case the new leader is part of the same clique, which ought to be investigated" (*La Jornada*, 1 March). The CNTE has called for a "megamarch" on March 5 against the imposition of the new bootlicker. But on the other hand, the logic of their statements is to demand ***greater*** state intervention! Similarly, Artemio Ortiz Hurtado of the National Democratic Executive Committee—another SNTE opposition—speaks of a possible indefinite teachers strike against the imposition of the new leader and against the "education reform," while at the same time he "takes [Peña Nieto] up on his word" and demands that the state go after "the entire Gordillo Morales clique"! These union opposition groups thus prove their political bankruptcy and fundamental affinity with the pro-capitalist perspective of the venal, gangster-like leaderships they seek to replace. We oppose such groups' appeals to the bourgeois courts in their efforts to gain leadership of the unions.

"La Maestra" became SNTE leader by Carlos Salinas's own appointment, and for over two decades she stood out as a professional gangster and a traitor to the proletariat. But as a union leader, she should be judged by the workers movement. The working class must clean its own house! The struggle for the genuine democratization of the unions is inseparable from the struggle to forge a class-struggle, revolutionary leadership that fights for the historic interests of the proletariat. Workers must forge their own party, a revolutionary party that champions their own interests and those of the oppressed in the struggle to once and for all end the bosses' regime. ■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Repression, Privatizations, Union Busting

"Pact for Mexico": War on Workers, Poor

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Presidencia de la República

Left: Protest outside Inauguration of Enrique Peña Nieto, Mexico City, December 1. Above: Party of the Democratic Revolution, National Action Party and Institutional Revolutionary Party signed "Pact for Mexico" the following day (Peña Nieto is second from left).

The following article was translated from Espartaco *No. 37 (February 2013), which is published by the Grupo Espartaquista de México, section of the International Communist League.*

While taking the oath as Mexico's new president in December, Enrique Peña Nieto of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) proclaimed that one of the priorities of his government would be to "restore peace." Meanwhile, the repressive forces of the capitalist state that he and the Mexico City government under the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) had mobilized were unleashed against students, workers and peasants protesting his inauguration outside the Congress building and at other locations. Unbridled, the cops beat and arrested people at random in downtown Mexico City. Some 100 people were wounded, 29 of them requiring hospital care. Dozens were arrested, some accused of "attacks against public order"—a rehash of the draconian "social dissolution" law used for decades by the PRI to quell social struggle. To release those who were arrested, the Mexico City legislative assembly modified the part of the legal code dealing with that offense to "eliminate the aggravating circumstances," while refusing to abolish the code as requested by the local human rights commission.

As we wrote following the repression in a December 2 leaflet:

> "In contrast to the widespread illusions in the possibility of reforming the bourgeois state displayed by [the student-based movement] #YoSoy132 since its inception, we as Marxists understand that the bourgeois state is and will always be an instrument of organized violence. Made up at its core of the police, army, courts and prisons, its purpose is to uphold the rule of the capitalist exploiters, regardless of which party is in charge. The repression launched by the rightist Rajoy government in Spain against anti-austerity demonstrators, the killing of 34 striking black miners at the hands of the South African ANC/SACP/COSATU popular-front government last August, and yesterday's events in Mexico, for example, prove vividly and brutally that the state machinery does not serve the interests of the exploited and the oppressed. It must be destroyed and replaced by a workers state."

On December 2, a day after the repressive onslaught, the three main bourgeois parties signed the "Pact for Mexico," a declaration of war against unions and the poor. Among other things, the agreement promotes "competitiveness" (i.e., reducing costs at the expense of the workers), private investment in [state-owned oil company] PEMEX (read: privatization), "education reform" (by destroying the SNTE teachers union) and "strengthening of the Mexican state" (i.e., the repressive apparatus). Adding insult to injury, Peña Nieto launched a "national crusade against hunger" just as the PRI announced its "firm" determination to tax food and medicine.

The "Pact for Mexico" comes in the wake of the enactment of the reactionary labor "reform." The previous labor law had imposed mandatory arbitration, collection of union dues directly by the employer and several other measures designed to keep the unions tied to the state and the bosses. While upholding these measures, the new labor law makes firing workers easier, encourages temporary contracts, promotes outsourcing even further and attacks health care and the right to strike. ***Down with the labor "reform"! Down with the "Pact for Mexico"!***

There is no doubt what type of "peace" Peña Nieto was referring to in his inaugural speech. It is a new rendition of "Pax Porfiriana" [named after longtime dictator

continued on page 10

Hands Off Mexican Teachers Union!

AP

February 27: SNTE leader Elba Esther Gordillo at hearing in Mexico City prison.

The following is a translation of a leaflet published on March 4 by the Grupo Espartaquista de México.

On February 26, the Enrique Peña Nieto government arrested Elba Esther Gordillo Morales, "La Maestra" [the teacher], leader "for life" of the National Union of Education Workers (SNTE). Peña Nieto's immediate goal was to eliminate any obstacle to the "education reform," which he had enacted the previous day and which represents an attack on the teachers union and the gains made by its members [see article on this page]. Having declared her opposition to the "reform," Gordillo—for decades a trusted ally of every government administration—became an evident target of the new state onslaught. "La Maestra" has been accused of "money laundering" and "organized crime," and two other SNTE officials, Nora Guadalupe Ugarte Ramírez and Isaías Gallardo Chávez, have also been arrested.

Gordillo's arrest is an attack on the teachers union and the workers movement as a whole, as was the 1989 *Quinazo*, when President Carlos Salinas of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) imprisoned oil workers union leader Joaquín Hernández Galicia, known as "La Quina." We Spartacists oppose on principle the intervention of the bourgeois state in the affairs of the unions, which are the elementary defense organizations of the working class. State intervention into the unions has nothing to do with "democratizing" them; the bourgeoisie's goal is to place them ever more firmly under its control. Defending the union movement must include the demand for the ***immediate release of Gordillo and all arrested union officials.***

It took the rest of the SNTE national leadership barely a few hours to go from promising Gordillo "loyalty, affection and solidarity" to replacing her and declaring that they were "being born again." After receiving Peña Nieto's approval, one Juan Díaz de la Torre was "elected" new SNTE leader. Without wasting any time, he asserted in his inaugural speech that the SNTE will support the "education reform."

As was to be expected, the main bourgeois parties—PRI, PAN [National Action Party], PRD [Party of the Democratic Revolution] and Morena [Movement for National Regeneration]—cheered the news of Gordillo's arrest. Martí Batres, [Andrés Manuel] López Obrador's sidekick in Morena, demands that [Carlos Romero] Deschamps, leader of the powerful oil workers union, be arrested as well.

continued on page 11

WORKERS VANGUARD

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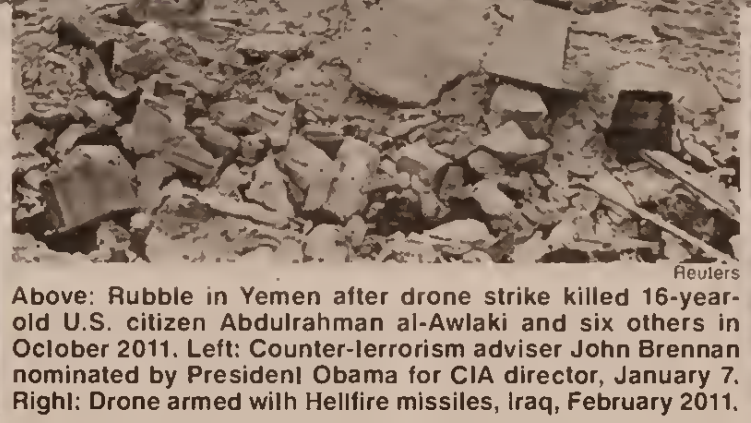
No. 1020

22 March 2013

Bourgeoisie Debates Drones, Military Costs

Fine-Tuning U.S. Imperialist Terror Machine

Reuters



Reuters

U.S. Army

Above: Rubble in Yemen after drone strike killed 16-year-old U.S. citizen Abdulrahman al-Awlaki and six others in October 2011. Left: Counter-terrorism adviser John Brennan nominated by President Obama for CIA director, January 7. Right: Drone armed with Hellfire missiles, Iraq, February 2011.

In the nearly 12 years since the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, America's capitalist rulers have implemented an unprecedented enhancement of their repressive powers in the name of fighting the "war against terrorism." While unleashing its unrivaled military might from Iraq to Afghanistan, Washington has instituted massive wiretapping, surveillance and detention without trial at home. This trampling of basic rights was implemented first by the Bush administration and expanded by the Obama White House, as the ruling class sought to inculcate fear and acquiescence in the population. In obtaining legal sanction for its crimes at home and abroad, the government has made permanent fixtures of measures that in the main were portrayed as temporary exigencies. This is a deadly danger to the working class and oppressed minorities, the principal targets of capitalist repression.

The recent sparring between some on Capitol Hill and the White House over the targeted killings of U.S. citizens is all about making the state apparatus more effective in its murderous work. For weeks, various Senators made noises about holding up the confirmation of John Brennan as Obama's CIA chief. Four years ago, Brennan was so tarred by his association with torture under George W. Bush that Obama did not pursue his nomination to the same post. But he since became the architect of Obama's drone program.

Brennan's critics demanded that the White House release secret legal memos that had authorized the assassination of U.S. citizens, although neither Democrats nor Republicans have batted an eye over the thousands of Pakistanis, Yemenis and others slaughtered by drones. When the Justice Department White Paper summarizing the memos surfaced in February, politicians on both sides of the aisle overwhelmingly hailed this augmentation of the lethal powers of the imperial presidency. In urging Brennan's rapid confirmation, Democratic Senator Dianne Feinstein intoned, with presumably unintended menace: "He draws on a deep well of experience."

It was to be expected that the Democrats would go along with their Commander-in-Chief. So it was right-wing Republican Senator Rand Paul of Kentucky who challenged Obama, mainly about the prospect of the assassination of U.S. citizens on American soil. Paul's 13-hour filibuster on March 6, aimed at blocking Brennan's confirmation vote, was widely covered in the media and received plaudits from some liberal antiwar activists and others. Make no mistake, libertarians like Paul, a Tea Party favorite, hate unions and spending government money on black people—or anyone else for that matter—far more than they object to the evisceration of civil liberties.

The Obama administration demonstrated its determination to assassinate U.S. citizens when it killed New Mexico-born Islamist Anwar al-Awlaki by a drone strike in Yemen in 2011. His son and several Yemenis were similarly blown away some months later. And all along, the White House has kept open the option of assassinating U.S. citizens on American soil as well. In a March 4 letter to Rand Paul, Attorney General Eric Holder dismissed the scenario of drone strikes inside U.S. territory as "entirely hypothetical" but granted that the president could "conceivably" authorize such attacks in the context of a "catastrophic attack" like Pearl Harbor or September 11.

On the day after the filibuster, Holder issued a curt follow-up letter claiming the right of the president to assassinate anyone, anywhere except for citizens "not engaged in combat" on U.S. soil. For the imperialists, who is "engaged in combat" is a very elastic concept. In May 2002, U.S. citizen Jose Padilla was arrested at Chicago's O'Hare Airport on trumped-up charges. One month later, he was declared to be an "enemy combatant" and was disappeared into a Navy brig in South Carolina. In the end, he was railroaded to 17 years in prison. In an *amicus* brief filed by the Spartacist League and the Partisan Defense Committee on Padilla's behalf, we stressed that the "rationale of the 'war against terrorism' is a construct justifying not only the right to disappear citizens, but the right to assassinate them as well."

Imperialist Crimes

A week after Brennan's confirmation, a UN official presenting an investigation into U.S. drone strikes declared that such attacks carried out in Pakistan over the objections of local authorities violated international law. The UN investigation, carried out at the request of Russia and China as well as Pakistan, identified some 330 strikes in that country, totaling at least 2,200 dead. With U.S. drones firing with impunity on the population, including emergency response personnel, funeral processions and schools, life in the tribal areas along the Afghanistan border has been shattered. Some imperialist strategists worry, with reason, that the unbridled drone program is creating a lot more "enemy combatants" around the world.

To mollify those in Washington who worry about the excessive secrecy of the drone program and have qualms about deploying drones against U.S. citizens, proposals have been made for a special court to approve the "targeted killings." This is a total sham. Such a court would be modeled on the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) courts for wiretapping applications. FISA courts have never been more than a rubber stamp for the executive office.

In another proposal to refine U.S. imperialist policies, a *New York Times* (9 March) editorial called for repealing the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF). This legislation, which was adopted three days after the September 11 attacks, gave the executive *carte blanche* in the global "war on terror," providing a go-ahead for the invasion of Afghanistan and also much of the basis for "anti-terror" measures on the home front. The *Times*—whose services to the "war on terror" included reporter Judith Miller retailing the fiction of Saddam Hussein's "weapons of mass destruction"—now laments "an unintelligible policy without express limits or protective walls" implemented under the 2001

continued on page 11

France

Uproar Over Same-Sex Marriage.....8

More Capitalist Cruelty: Companies Looting Retired Miners' Benefits

no credit

Retired coal miner suffering from black lung disease, with his miner son in West Virginia.

In "U.S. Health Care and the Elderly: Capitalist Cruelty" (*WV* No. 1019, 8 March), we noted that "for the owners of banks and industry, government spending on caring for the aged is an unnecessary overhead expense that ultimately lowers the overall profit rate." And it's not just government spending they're after. The top two U.S. coal mining companies, Peabody Energy (the world's largest private producer) and Arch Coal, have schemed to rob 22,000 retired union miners and their families of their pensions and health care.

Peabody started the process by spinning off a company called Patriot Coal in 2007. While covering only 13 percent of Peabody's coal reserves, Patriot was assigned 40 percent of the parent company's health care and other obligations under its contract with the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA). A year later, Patriot acquired Magnum Coal, an offshoot of Arch. The result is Peabody and Arch offloading $1.37 billion in liabilities. As the UMWA puts it, Patriot was "set up to fail," created to purge the books of pension and health care obligations. Sure enough, Patriot is now in Chapter 11 bankruptcy proceedings.

This is the route that was earlier taken by steel, auto and airline companies to shred retiree benefits in the interest of corporate profits. Now the same ax hangs over people who risked life and limb—and lungs!—every day in the mines and, if they survived, carry debilitating injuries and illnesses into old age. Black lung disease, for example, has undergone a resurgence in recent years. Retired Kentucky miner I.G. Camp, who suffers from black lung contracted in the Peabody mines, put it bluntly in a union video: "All of us old people that can't work no more, they'd like to put us plum out."

The UMWA's cradle-to-grave health and retirement benefits, financed by tonnage royalties paid by the companies, are a direct product of hard-fought miners' strikes in 1946 and 1948. Democratic president Harry Truman temporarily nationalized the mines in response to the first walkout. But the miners refused to return to work until the fund was created. The UMWA struck again two years later to force the mine owners to write the first pension check. A by-product of these struggles was the establishment of a network of Miners Memorial Hospitals up and down the Appalachian mining belt, where medical care had been all but nonexistent.

It's been a while since the pro-capitalist union tops played hardball, however, and the UMWA has steadily given up ground to non-union outfits, which are often subsidiaries of the giant conglomerates. In regard to Patriot, the UMWA bureaucracy is pinning retirees' hopes mainly to the union's seat on a creditors' committee in the bankruptcy proceeding and a class action suit against Peabody and Arch. The bureaucrats are also counting on the good graces of West Virginia Democratic Senator Jay Rockefeller, who is pushing a measure to have the federal government pay some of the retiree pension and health care liabilities that the coal companies won't.

The entire history of organized labor—not least that of the miners—shows that whatever workers have won has been gained through class struggle, not reliance on the courts and politicians of the capitalist enemy. That understanding must come to the fore in the struggle to defend past gains and to carry out the crucial task of organizing the unorganized. This is a burning issue in the mining industry, where union health and safety committees are the workers' only real protection against the life-threatening hazards of the work, and against the companies that cut corners on safety to save a few pennies. But the UMWA leadership has acceded to the loss of union membership, particularly with the shift to strip mining, which requires far fewer workers than underground mines and often takes place in Western states where the UMWA lacks strong roots.

As we suggested in our article last issue, the labor movement would find many ready allies if it were to take up the fight for free, quality medical care for everyone. The Patriot case would be a good place to start. Tens of thousands of unorganized miners would see the struggle to guarantee the 22,000 UMWA pensioners and their dependents the benefits due them as in their own interests. To win such battles requires breaking with the labor bureaucracy's class-collaborationist policies, which have only helped the bosses to throw the union movement so far back. ■

TROTSKY

LENIN

Lenin on Women's Emancipation

Writing nearly two years after the 1917 Bolshevik-led proletarian seizure of power in Russia, V.I. Lenin gave a critical progress report on the status of women in the fledgling workers state. Under conditions of extreme backwardness, civil war and imperialist invasion, the early Soviet government sought, insofar as it was able, to make women full participants in the workforce and all realms of life by taking steps to replace the family with collective institutions to perform household tasks. The Bolsheviks understood that the oppression of women would ultimately be rooted out only with the development of a socialist society based on material abundance, requiring the extension of proletarian revolution to the advanced capitalist countries.

Take the position of women. In this field, not a single democratic party in the world, not even in the most advanced bourgeois republic, has done in decades so much as a hundredth part of what we did in our very first year in power. We really razed to the ground the infamous laws placing women in a position of inequality, restricting divorce and surrounding it with disgusting formalities, denying recognition to children born out of wedlock, enforcing a search for their fathers, etc., laws numerous survivals of which, to the shame of the bourgeoisie and of capitalism, are to be found in all civilised countries. We have a thousand times the right to be proud of what we have done in this field. But the more *thoroughly* we have cleared the ground of the lumber of the old, bourgeois laws and institutions, the clearer it is to us that we have only cleared the ground to build on but are not yet building.

Notwithstanding all the laws emancipating woman, she continues to be a *domestic slave*, because *petty housework* crushes, strangles, stultifies and degrades her, chains her to the kitchen and the nursery, and she wastes her labour on barbarously unproductive, petty, nerve-racking, stultifying and crushing drudgery. The real *emancipation of women*, real communism, will begin only where and when an all-out struggle begins (led by the proletariat wielding the state power) against this petty housekeeping, or rather when its *wholesale transformation* into a large-scale socialist economy begins.

Do we in practice pay sufficient attention to this question, which in theory every Communist considers indisputable? Of course not. Do we take proper care of the *shoots* of communism which already exist in this sphere? Again the answer is *no*. Public catering establishments, nurseries, kindergartens—here we have examples of these shoots, here we have the simple, everyday means, involving nothing pompous, grandiloquent or ceremonial, which can *really emancipate women*, really lessen and abolish their inequality with men as regards their role in social production and public life.

—V.I. Lenin, "A Great Beginning" (28 June 1919)

CLARIFICATION

In "India: Deadly Rape Sparks Mass Protests" (*WV* No. 1017, 8 February), we observed that "the fake-Trotskyist New Wave Group, affiliated with the Morenoite International Workers League, published a January 19 statement proposing 'more representation of women in police' (www.litci.org)." This has caused some confusion among readers familiar with the left in that country. We were referring to the Pune-based outfit that in early 2011 split from a Delhi-based organization of the same name. The Delhi group, whose online organ remains *New Wave*, renamed itself the Workers' Socialist Party in November 2012.

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Japanese Imperialism Steps Up Threats Against North Korea, China

This article is based on a recent report from the Spartacist Group/Japan, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

The economic situation for Japan continues to be dire even compared with other imperialist countries, with less than 1 percent growth of the gross domestic product in 2012. With a contracting domestic market, the only perspective for the bourgeoisie is to increase overseas investments and seek increased profits from those investments. The protection of those investments, ultimately through military means, is a life-and-death question for the ruling class.

Intertwined with this goal is the imperialist bourgeoisie's strategic aim of undoing the social revolutions that overturned capitalist rule in countries of Asia (China, North Korea, Vietnam and Laos). China, with its massive economy and population, is the central target. Imperialism will never cease its quest to reverse the Chinese Revolution, which in 1949 ripped a quarter of the world's population out of the realm of direct imperialist exploitation. Japan is continuously building up its military and related technology in the framework of its strategic alliance with the U.S. Massive Japan-U.S. military exercises were held in the fall of 2012 in the Okinawa area, with close to 50,000 soldiers.

For the first time in years, under the right-wing Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) government elected in December, Tokyo has increased the war budget and plans to increase the size of the armed forces by almost 20,000. This is explicitly motivated as "countering the threat" from China and North Korea. The LDP is the perennial ruling party of big business. Before being ousted by the Democratic Party (DP) in the 2009 elections, it was in office for all but ten months since 1955. Formed out of split-offs from the LDP, the DP—which also picked up numerous defectors from the Social Democratic Party (formerly Socialist Party)—is a bourgeois party that postured as being more sympathetic to the common people. The DP, which gets electoral support from the pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucracy, championed renewed militarism when it held office by, for example, relaxing the law that had restricted the export of military goods and establishing Japan's first overseas military base since World War II, in Djibouti.

Disgruntlement with the LDP over the world financial crisis propelled the DP's 2009 victory. But just over three years later it was swept out. The DP had promised to move an American military base from Okinawa but reneged in the face of the enraged response of the U.S., Japan's key ally. In December the LDP took over again as the DP lost three-quarters of its seats in the parliament's lower house. Aggressive support for increased militarism and China-bashing was at the center of the whole bourgeois electoral circus.

The Japanese Communist Party (JCP) occasionally mildly protests that such militarism is "unconstitutional," but for the most part these reformists promote social-chauvinist defense of "our" country. When the government deployed its own missiles to shoot down North Korea's recently launched missile (in case "it fell down" on Japanese territory), the JCP made no protest. True to form, the JCP saluted recent UN sanctions against North Korea. Amid the imperialist military build-up, there have been massive mobilizations in Okinawa against U.S. military bases, with the direct support of a number of local bourgeois figures. The JCP and the rest of the reformist left seek to channel popular anger against the U.S. bases in a nationalist direction. The JCP calls to "abrogate the U.S.-Japan alliance" and likes to portray Japan as a nation subjugated by U.S. imperialism.

U.S. Navy

White House

U.S. and Japanese warships in joint exercise last fall. Inset: New Japanese prime minister Shinzo Abe at February 22 White House meeting with Obama, where they agreed to push for tougher sanctions against North Korea.

The slogan of the Spartacist Group/Japan is "Smash the counterrevolutionary alliance of Japanese and U.S. imperialism through workers revolution on both sides of the Pacific!" It remains our strategic task to raise the proletariat's consciousness of the connection between the struggle to defend its own living standards against the capitalist bosses at home and the need for the defense of the deformed workers states against capitalist counterrevolution. The defense of those states is linked to our program for workers political revolutions against the anti-revolutionary Stalinist bureaucracies.

Propping Up South Korea

A key pillar of capitalist rule in Asia is military cooperation by the U.S.-Japan alliance with the South Korean bourgeoisie. The Japanese government hailed the election of conservative candidate Park Geun-hye in December and expects relations with South Korea to improve under her government. Notably, her father, Park Chung-hee—who headed the brutal anti-Communist military dictatorship for close to 20 years—received his military training in Japan so that he could serve as an officer in Japan's colonial military police in occupied China in the 1940s. He had warm relations with Japan's right wing, in particular the WWII war criminal Nobosuke Kishi, going back to the Japanese occupation of Manchuria. Shinzo Abe, the new prime minister, happens to be Kishi's grandson. The Japanese media has approvingly cited an anecdote about Park Geun-hye from the time her father was killed in 1979: rather than cry, her immediate reaction was to worry whether the border with North Korea was secure.

In the summer of 2012, the visit of then-South Korean president Lee Myung-bak to the contested and uninhabited Takeshima/Dokdo islands inflamed both Korean and Japanese nationalist feelings. Hugely unpopular at home, Lee tried to use nationalism to increase his support. We are indifferent to the ownership of these rocks. While denouncing Japanese revanchism in the strongest terms, we oppose the nationalist campaign in both countries. The JCP, naturally, immediately joined in the national unity chorus against the South Korean president's visit. But even the JCP has to admit that Japan first claimed those islands at a time when the Korean peninsula was under the thumb of the Japanese colonial administration.

U.S. imperialism has been concerned that its two key anti-Communist allies in the region are going at each other over some rocks. The JCP's posture very much mirrors this position. In the territorial dispute with China over the Senkaku islands (known as the Diaoyu in China), the JCP demands an "aggressive" diplomatic anti-China stance. But in regard to the dispute with South Korea, the JCP demands a more careful and "softer" approach. The JCP thinks that Tokyo should start by "apologizing" to South Korea over Japan's crimes when it was the colonial overlord...and then convince Korea that these rocks are Japanese.

In the context of this territorial row, Lee Myung-bak demanded an apology from the Japanese Emperor over Japan's colonial crimes in Korea. This predictably caused an uproar in bourgeois circles. While the JCP voted against the parliamentary resolution denouncing South Korea over this conflict (because it "escalated tensions"), the party was silent on the question of the emperor itself, a glaring capitulation to the reactionary emperor system.

East and Southeast Asia remain an arena of fierce economic competition among the imperialists, centrally the U.S. and Japan. The U.S.-South Korea Free Trade Agreement, which went into effect in March 2012, eliminates South Korean tariffs on two-thirds of U.S. farm products; U.S. grain exporters are salivating over anticipated profits (see "U.S.-South Korea Trade Pact Targets China, Korean Workers," *WV* No. 1008, 14 September 2012).

A key target for Japanese imperialism is the Philippines (as well as Thailand and Indonesia). The government has been noting with satisfaction an increase in political stability in the Philippines neocolony under the current Aquino leadership. The Japanese army is in Somalia, but there has been virtually no press coverage about Somalia in recent months. The longest-standing foreign deployment by the Japanese army, in the Golan Heights, was terminated recently due to the heightened tensions in Syria, which Japan fears getting embroiled in. There continue to be tensions over oil with the U.S. Still relatively dependent on Iranian oil, Japan demanded—and received—an exemption from Washington's sanctions aimed at strangling Iran while agreeing to increase imports from countries like Saudi Arabia, thus strengthening Iran's isolation.

Targeting China

Overall, China continues to be the most important location for Japanese investment and Japan's biggest trading partner by far. At the same time, under the slogan of "China plus one," companies seek to decrease dependence on China by pursuing other Asian countries. For the past two years, new investments in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations have exceeded new investments in China. Shinzo Abe's first trip as prime minister was to this region. One aim of the bourgeoisie is to "roll back" Chinese economic and political influence in Southeast Asia, using massive amounts of aid, loans, etc.

continued on page 4

Spartacist Black History Forum

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Japan...

(continued from page 3)

The aim of destroying the Chinese deformed workers state through capitalist counterrevolution remains central to all maneuvers by the bourgeoisie. An important shift in the Japanese domestic political situation was triggered by a "proposal" by right-wing hawk Shintaro Ishihara (at the time the governor of Tokyo) to buy the Senkaku islands in order to bring them under direct Tokyo government control. Showing the popular appeal of this nationalist plan, he collected enormous amounts of money from the population. This was at bottom a demagogic ploy, seeking to force the hand of the government to "nationalize" these islands, which is exactly what happened.

This move in turn led to an enormous nationalist, anti-Japan outburst in China, the largest in decades according to the Japanese bourgeois press, with retrograde nationalism being encouraged by the Stalinist bureaucrats in Beijing. The ICL takes no position on whether the uninhabited Senkaku/Diaoyu islands belong to Japan or China. But in the event of a military conflict threatening the deformed workers state, we unconditionally defend China against imperialism.

The protests in China had a negative impact on the Japanese capitalists' profits by bringing about a decrease in exports from Japan as well as a decrease in production in their factories in China. Initially, there were dissenting voices within the bourgeoisie, denouncing Ishihara as "irresponsible," and Japan's ambassador to China was fired after voicing soft opposition. Outrageously, but not surprisingly, the JCP danced to Ishihara's tune, demanding that the national government, not the city of Tokyo, "nationalize" these islands.

The Domestic Situation and the General Elections

The LDP swept the general elections to the lower house, gaining a two-thirds majority of seats together with its bloc partner, the Buddhist Komeito party. Abe is on the right wing of the LDP and was prime minister for about a year between 2006 and 2007. The LDP victory is a result of a combination of factors: hatred for the previous DP government, the lowest electoral participation since World War II (with less than 60 percent of the electorate voting) and the very undemocratic voting system. Ominously, Ishihara's even more right-wing Japan Restoration Party (JRP) did well. The reformist workers parties were battered, particularly the Social Democratic Party.

In Abe's previous term, while mending relations with China somewhat, his main achievements for the bourgeoisie were a number of ideologically driven measures, e.g., upgrading the Defense Agency to the Defense Ministry, pushing for more reactionary educational policies and laying the groundwork for a referendum to change the "Peace Constitution." Imposed on Japan by the victorious U.S. imperialists after WWII, the Constitution decrees, in its Article Nine, that Japan will "forever renounce war... and the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes." The SGJ opposes any changes in Article Nine that would aid Japanese imperialism in deploying its military might in Asia. At the same time, in combatting pacifist illusions, we stress that no constitution can prevent the bourgeoisie from using its military forces to defend its interests. The main effect of Article Nine is that the army is euphemistically called "Self-Defense Forces." Nonetheless, opposition to the Constitution remains a rallying cry for bourgeois right-wingers.

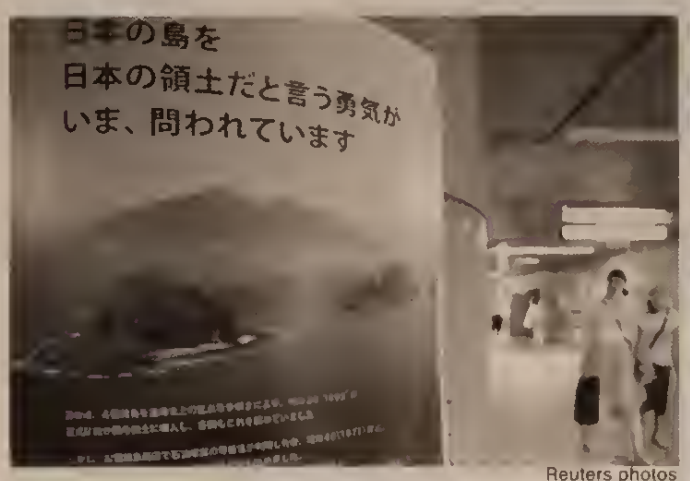
To a large extent, Abe's fall in 2007 was provoked by economic problems, with anger at the base of society and, significantly, among the small capitalists. The previous LDP prime minister, Junichiro Koizumi, had strongly emphasized questions of the economy while Abe pushed patriotism, racism and "family values." It is not an accident that this time around Abe has been stressing "economic recovery" as his highest priority. At the same time, one of the first acts of the new government was to finalize the racist decision taken by the prior Democratic Party government to exclude Korean high schools in Japan from receiving the subsidies that make public high schools free of charge.

Abe has been on a public relations campaign promising to deal aggressively with economic woes by large-scale investment in public infrastructure (hardly a new idea) and massive "financial easing," i.e., throwing money at the banks for investment and especially financial speculation. This plan provoked quite a discussion within the bourgeoisie. With the DP denouncing the LDP for "wasteful spending," even the *Keidanren* bosses' federation initially attacked Abe as "reckless," which they later retracted. At bottom, sections of the bourgeoisie warned Abe that this policy of limitless buying of government bonds by the central bank was Japan's pre-WWII policy, which ended in catastrophe and collapse.

And of course, even if such measures "work" in bourgeois terms, they will only prepare the next bubble. Fundamentally, what this debate signifies is the lack of alternatives for the bourgeoisie, with no perspective of rebuilding an economy that has been in decline for more than 20 years. Even the business daily *Nikkei* warned: "Economic recovery. There is no magic." In 2012 alone, the stock market saw an overall increase of over 20 percent. While the finance capitalists were raking it in, the masses were simply getting poorer.

Since the 2011 earthquake and tsunami disaster, the ruling class has pushed a campaign of massive attacks on living standards while promoting "national unity." The question has been posed: In what direction will anger and frustration among the population go and how will it be expressed? It is widely noted that in addition to anti-China nationalism, it was worries about the economic situation that largely determined voters' decisions not to support the DP. In this regard, it is also notable that by December 2012 the issue of nuclear power was not a central issue in the election. (The LDP all along has said it intends to restart the reactors, an unpopular position.)

The domestic situation over the last couple of months has been centrally marked by a sharp turn to the right in bourgeois discourse and more open militarism and nationalism over the territorial disputes. In a major speech to the Diet (parliament) in late February, Abe claimed there was "no ownership dispute" over the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands because they "clearly belong to Japan." Ludicrously alleging "continued challenges to our borders and sovereignty," which he claimed constituted a "clear and present danger," Abe ominously evoked the war between Britain and Argentina over the Falklands/Malvinas islands in 1982 (*Wall Street Journal online*, 27 February).



Reuters photos

Nationalist squabble over unpopulated Senkaku/Diaoyu islands picks up, September 2012: Poster in Tokyo subway station (above) claims islands as Japanese; demonstrators in Beijing (right) march on Japanese embassy with banner reading "Get Out of the Diaoyu!"

A month before the elections, the hard-core right-wing ideologue Shintaro Ishihara joined Toru Hashimoto's Japan Restoration Party, which had been formed by Hashimoto (mayor of Osaka) in September. The party's name harks back to the Meiji Restoration of 1867-68, and its spokesmen borrow a number of terms from that period for their speeches. This is intended to stress how they want to "radically" change Japan. Ishihara is a longtime, all-purpose reactionary and militarist. Always a hawk against China, in 2002 he went on a rant demanding that Japan declare war on North Korea. He has also denied that the 1937 Nanjing Massacre, carried out by the Japanese during their occupation of China, ever occurred, describing it as just Chinese propaganda. Hashimoto, for his part, is known for his strong nationalist positions and for his aggressive line in going after trade unions, targeting in particular public employees and teachers.

The Japan Restoration Party sees itself as a right-wing pressure group on the LDP, openly proclaiming the need for nuclear weapons, advocating abolition of the minimum wage, etc. They see the current political situation as an opportunity to push forward with reactionary Constitutional revision. Following the upper house elections in the summer, they might increase their weight and impact on the direction of the government.

The Long Shadow of the Fukushima Disaster

The March 2011 tsunami and nuclear disaster continue to cast their shadow on Japanese society (see "Japan Tsunami Disaster and Capitalist Criminality," *WV* No. 978, 15 April 2011). There are still nearly 320,000 people who have not been able to return to their homes, many of whom lost their jobs. The workers on temporary contracts who heroically fought to bring the meltdown at the Daiichi nuclear power plant under control have been mostly cast off—fired and sent back to their hometowns, making it nearly impossible to track the impact on their health of the exposure to high radiation. After Fukushima, the JCP made a turn to a line of "zero nuclear power," and its daily paper *Akahata* now regularly exposes the plight of former workers and residents of the devastated region. The JCP's perspective is going to court to challenge the big electrical companies for their undeniably illegal abuse of the workers.

The tsunami was a natural disaster, but the appalling toll in human lives was in large measure a product of the unbridled greed and corruption that flow naturally from an anarchic economic system premised on the drive for private profit. In the interests of holding down costs, the TEPCO electric utility company had for years ignored every kind of basic safety consideration, with the eager collusion of the government. In the aftermath of the disaster, the government enraged the population with a stream of cover-ups and disinformation aimed at downplaying the danger of leaking radiation. In the aftermath, the bourgeois rulers used the tragedy as a justification for further militarization of society, with the largest call-up of military forces since the end of WWII. Prattling about supposedly shared "national interests" and touting the army as "heroes," they imposed security measures that prevented food and other urgently needed assistance from reaching desperate people.

Last summer a massive anti-nuclear campaign developed, based on widespread fears about nuclear power and a stream of exposures of how the government and electrical companies never cared about safety at these plants. Mobilizations were as large as 200,000 people, including outraged youth, workers and the petty bourgeoisie, religious groups and all types of "greens." While working-class contingents were mobilized by the JCP, these protests were class-collaborationist through and through, with a number of bourgeois organizations participating in or leading them. Sponsors of the anti-nuclear energy campaign gathered close to eight million signatures on a petition to the government demanding that nuclear reactors throughout Japan not be restarted. Showing its contempt, one day after the signatures were handed in, the government restarted the first reactor, which is likely sitting right on top of an earthquake fault. While the mass of people supporting this campaign are motivated by fully justified distrust of the government and the greedy energy conglomerates, the central demands ("No to nuclear power! Turn to natural energy sources!") are not pro-working-class or socially progressive demands.

As communists, the ICL does not give advice to the ruling class about what might be more rational energy policies for running capitalist industry. While nuclear plants may be a particularly risky business in Japan, a country vulnerable to serious earthquakes, no form of energy production is without risks to workers and nearby communities. Throughout industry, we call for trade-union control of working conditions and, where there are specific hazards, for union action to shut down dangerous operations. But ultimately, under capitalism concerns about workers' safety will always be sacrificed to the bosses' unremitting drive for greater profits.

The Workers Movement and the Reformist Left

Deindustrialization has accelerated: over the last 20 years six million manufacturing jobs were lost, with close to 1.5 million lost over the past four years. This has hit the mainstays of union power in the manufacturing sector hard. There is

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the fact of job losses, a decrease in union membership and the undermining of the potential power of the unions. This has a real impact on proletarian consciousness, as do the betrayals of the trade-union leaders who refuse to fight to defend jobs. Official unemployment for people under 24 is around 10 percent. Union membership is at the lowest point since the postwar period, with fewer than ten million members, some 20 percent less than at the highest point in 1994. The huge number of workers in unstable employment (including temporary and part-time workers and those who work for small subcontractors), whom the trade union bureaucracy is not fighting to unionize, is a large factor in demoralizing the working class as a whole.

The JCP has waged a big campaign over the last few months protesting a plan to fire 130,000 workers in the electronics industry. However, the campaign is counterposed to any independent mobilization of the working class, instead consisting of complaints that layoffs and plant closures also hurt the local petty bourgeoisie and are bad for local tax revenues. The JCP wraps its campaign in nationalism, attacking huge companies for their "American management style"—in other words, companies more easily firing workers—and for Japan's "loss of technology" when plants are moved to lower-wage countries (*Akahata*, 30 September 2012).

The number of industrial accidents—not only at nuclear power plants—has drastically increased in recent years. An accident in the Sasago tunnel in December 2012 received international press coverage. In this atrocity, nine people were killed near the city of Otsuki, about 50 miles west of Tokyo, when concrete slabs weighing 1.2 tons apiece fell onto vehicles from the ceiling of a highway tunnel. This "accident" was a direct outcome of the privatization of the national roadway system under Koizumi, undermining the maintenance of that system. Another widely publicized case last fall was a gas fire in a chemical plant where the firemen arriving at the scene were blown up by a further explosion. Compounding the bourgeoisie's refusal to spend money on infrastructure and safety procedures is the increasing use of inexperienced and untrained casual workers.

The Social Democratic Party, having joined the DP government in 2009, was thrown out like a squeezed lemon after opposing the deal with the U.S. over military bases in Okinawa. In the recent elections, the JCP lost one parliamentary seat, reducing its seats from nine to eight, while the SDP barely got two seats and lost close to 50 percent of its former votes. The SDP is hugely dependent on government financial subsidies for its survival, and defections of top leaders to the openly bourgeois camp have been frequent.

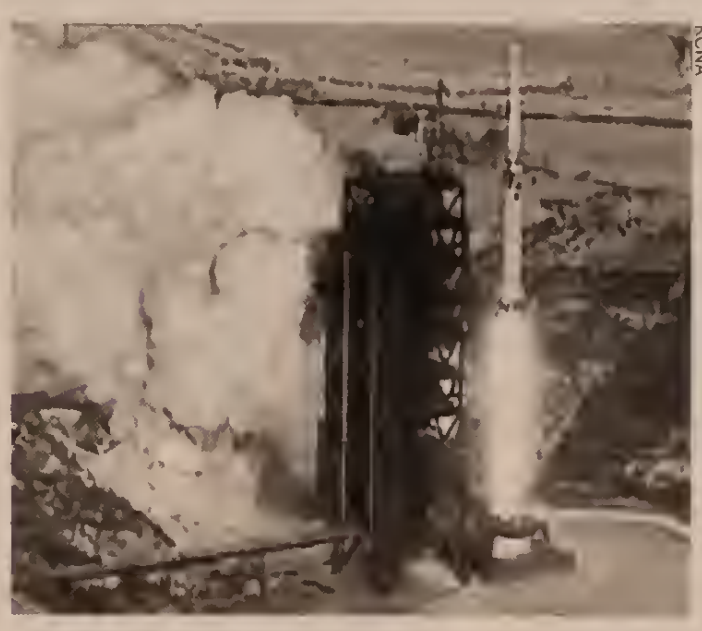
Neither JCP- nor SDP-related unions are centrally anchored in the core manufacturing industries, although both have a base in rail. Following the anti-Communist offensive in the early postwar period and the dissolution of the powerful union federation it led, the JCP was to a large extent driven out of manufacturing, although today it organizes some part-time and irregular workers in industry. Concomitantly the JCP has a relatively strong base in the petty bourgeoisie, which is a material basis for the particularly obnoxious nationalist and reactionary positions the party has taken. Given that it became anti-Soviet decades before the final destruction of the USSR by capitalist counterrevolution, it was less affected by that cataclysmic event than Communist parties in Europe. It remains a mass party, social-democratic rather than Stalinist.

While the reformist left is only offering illusions in making Japanese imperialism slightly less rapacious or exploitative, the SGJ continues the fight to crystallize a communist vanguard in order to build a revolutionary workers party. That party will struggle to lead the working class in the overthrow of Japanese capitalist rule, joining with the proletariat of the entire region in the fight for a socialist Asia. ■

Chinese Stalinists: Running Dogs for Imperialist Drive Against North Korea

When North Korea successfully conducted its third nuclear test in February, the U.S. predictably responded with saber rattling, and more. As new U.S. defense secretary Chuck Hagel announced that "missile defense" batteries along the West Coast would be expanded to counter the North Korean "threat," joint exercises are under way involving thousands of U.S. and South Korean troops engaged in land, air, sea and special operations drills. The imperialists also pushed through a new round of United Nations economic sanctions, adding to past measures that have served to throw much of North Korea's population into hunger. Treacherously, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) regime has supported previous sanctions and helped broker six-party "talks" aimed at the nuclear disarmament of North Korea, which, like China, is a bureaucratically deformed workers state. This time around, Beijing ***helped draw up*** the sanctions, an abject expression of the Stalinist policy of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism.

The UN resolution obligates member nations to take actions to enforce the embargo against North Korea, rather than simply requesting that they do so. Playing a balancing act, Beijing has never taken such action against Pyongyang. China is North Korea's only significant trading partner, helping maintain an economy that was thrown far back by the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union—North Korea's former economic lifeline—in 1991-92. However, there are voices in the CCP saying that China should wash its hands of its one-time ally. The London *Financial Times* (27 February) published


KCNA

December 12: North Korea launches satellite into orbit.

a piece by Deng Yuwen, deputy editor of *Study Times*, journal of the CCP's Central Party School, which baldly declared: "Beijing should give up on Pyongyang and press for the reunification of the Korean peninsula." China's new foreign minister, Wang Yi, who helped lead the disarmament meetings that collapsed in 2008, is known for wanting to cut the ties binding China to North Korea.

Deng Yuwen's article conceded that people in China commonly "view their relationship with Pyongyang through their shared sacrifice during the Korean war" of 1950-53. That war was launched by an imperialist invasion led by the U.S. in an attempt to smash social revolution. Under Soviet military protection following World War II, a workers state modeled on the USSR under the Stalinist bureaucracy was created in the North under Kim Il Sung, and workers and peasants engaged in struggle to smash the capitalists and landlords across the peninsula. The U.S., in its postwar role as the chief imperialist gendarme, used a United Nations fig leaf to unleash its war machine against the Korean masses, as the peninsula became the front line in the Cold War against the Soviet Union. After major initial North Korean advances, the U.S. juggernaut was able to push back close to Korea's border with China, the Yalu River.

It was the massive intervention by the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) that turned the tide. A series of human wave assaults, a heroic effort costing one million Chinese lives, threw the imperialist forces back across the 38th parallel. Mao Zedong's CCP regime, which had taken power the year before, realized that the imperialists aimed to roll back social revolution not only in Korea but in China as well. Indeed, several U.S. political and military representatives at the time mooted the possibility of dropping atomic bombs on China.

A 1953 armistice sealed the division of the Korean peninsula between the deformed workers state in the North and the capitalist state in the South. The imperialists had reduced Korea to rubble, with a staggering four million Koreans dead. Ever since, the U.S. has maintained a massive military presence in the South, numbering 28,500 troops today. For decades, this force propped up hated dictatorships. At all times, the U.S. military deployment has been a dagger pointed at both the Chinese and North Korean workers states and at the South Korean working class fighting against exploitation and oppression.

Defense of North Korea as well as China against imperialism and capitalist counterrevolution is the duty of the proletariat internationally, not least in the U.S. But you will certainly *not* hear this from the International Socialist Organization (ISO), followers of the late Tony Cliff. In "Why Are Tensions Rising in Korea?" (socialistworker.org, 15 March), the ISO's David Whitehouse allows that "the current crisis is made in the U.S.A." But he also takes pains to denounce North Korea as "a tyranny in which most of the population lives in poverty." Retired basketball superstar Dennis Rodman displayed a far better impulse, joining North Korean Stalinist leader Kim Jong Un at an exhibition basketball game in Pyongyang and reporting that Kim had one thing to relay to Obama: call me. For his simple act, Rodman was vilified, ridiculed and smeared by everyone from the White House press secretary on down to local media. To his credit, Rodman remains defiant.

The ISO article warns about possible plans by the U.S. and South Korea for a land invasion of the North. This is rather rich considering that the last time such an invasion took place, in 1950, Cliff and his cohorts ***capitulated to the U.S. and British imperialists*** by refusing to defend North Korea, marking their definitive break from Trotskyism. Since then, the Cliffites have supported every imperialist-sponsored counterrevolutionary movement arrayed against the former Soviet Union, China and other non-capitalist countries. The South Korean Cliffites, operating closer to the Demilitarized Zone, make their anti-Communist stance unambiguous. A 23 February article on the socialistworker.co.uk Web site by Young-Ik Kim, titled "North Korea: A Nuclear Bogeyman Created by the US," denounces the North Korean nuclear test as having "nothing to do with anti-imperialism or socialism." The article goes on to opine that the North's "nuclear programme—pursued at the expense of its people's livelihoods—will only increase tension in the region." This sentence could have been written word for word by the *Wall Street Journal*.

Those who, unlike the Cliffite bootlickers, see the need to stand with the workers states against the capitalist class enemy must understand that this includes supporting their development of nuclear weapons and necessary delivery systems—a crucial means of deterrence against imperialist attack. Chinese leftists would do well to remember China's own struggle to achieve nuclear weaponry. As we wrote in "Bureaucracy and Revolution in Moscow and Peking" (*Spartacist* No. 3, January-February 1965): "China's development of the A-bomb must be greeted by all revolutionary Marxists as a welcome strengthening of Chinese defenses at a time when the Chinese Revolution is not only being aggressively threatened by U.S. imperialism but when it is also being systematically betrayed by the Soviet bureaucracy in the search for 'peaceful coexistence'."

Some may see a fundamental discontinuity in the PLA's heroic struggle in 1950-53 and Beijing's toadying to the imperialists over North Korean nukes today. In fact, these events speak to the contradictory nature of the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy. Deriving its privileges from the collectivized economy that is at the core of the workers state, the bureaucracy is forced at times to defend that state against capitalist forces. At the same time, the Stalinist dogma of "socialism in one country" means that the needs of one's own state are paramount. Inevitably, this leads to seeking accommodation with world imperialism, stabbing other Communist regimes in the back and selling out revolutions elsewhere.

After the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies fell out in the late 1950s and '60s, Mao's China forged a counterrevolutionary alliance with U.S. imperialism against the USSR. In sharp opposition to both regimes, we Trotskyists declared: For Communist unity against imperialism! The ***continuity*** between Mao's CCP and today's regime, with its "socialist market economy," lies in their shared opposition to the Marxist program of world proletarian revolution. Ultimately, as Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky pointed out in *The Revolution Betrayed* (1937) and other works, unless the Stalinist caste is swept away by the workers, bureaucratic privilege, political suppression of the working class and appeasement of imperialism threaten the very existence of the workers state. That prognosis was tragically borne out in the Soviet Union.

In North Korea, "socialism in half a country" à la the Kims has been particularly vulgar in its nepotism and cult of personality. Despite strident rhetoric against the U.S. and its South Korean lackeys, the Pyongyang regime renounces any perspective for the revolutionary overthrow of the South Korean capitalist class. We call for the ***revolutionary reunification*** of Korea, through proletarian political revolution in the North and workers socialist revolution in the South. This is part of the International Communist League's perspective for a socialist Asia, which requires as well a political revolution to sweep away the Chinese Stalinist regime and, crucially, the proletarian overthrow of Japanese imperialism. The ICL is dedicated to forging Leninist-Trotskyist parties to lead such struggles around the world. ■

Church of Avakian Decrees: No Nudes Is Good Nudes

Ordering his acolytes once more unto the breach, Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) leader Bob Avakian has anathematized *Playboy*, porn shops, strip clubs, Xtube and *50 Shades of Grey*. These puritanical Maoists, steeped in reactionary "family values" moralism, have taken an outlandish turn with their "End Pornography and Patriarchy: The Enslavement and Degradation of Women" campaign.

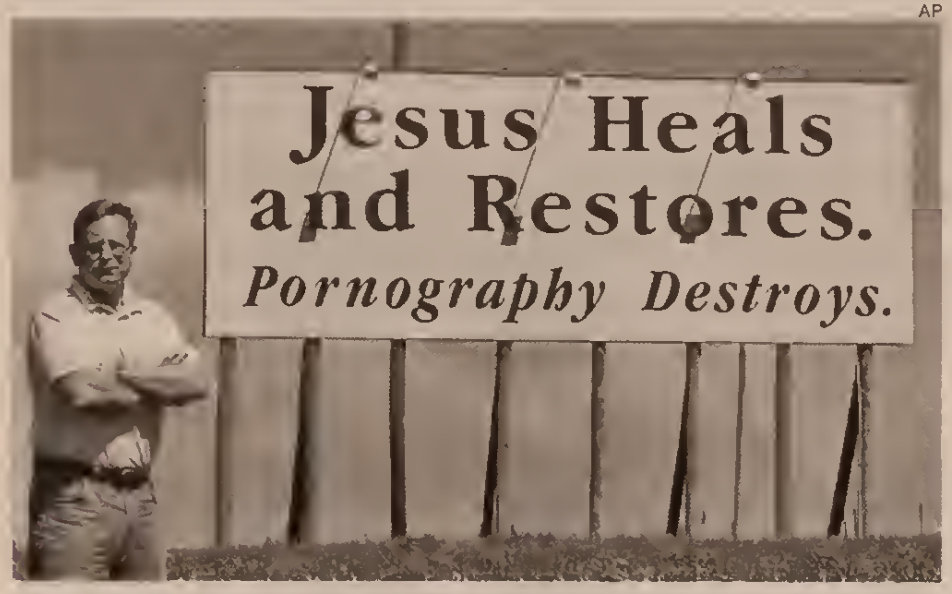
Since 2012, the RCP has despicably used International Women's Day, a proletarian holiday, as a platform to march through New York and other cities, shrieking at billboards that "objectify women" and protesting sex shops and local strip clubs. Giving the evangelicals some stiff competition, RCPers can be found on street corners and college campuses handing out palm cards that order people to "STOP WATCHING PORN" because it "corrupts the humanity of those who watch it." RCP proselytizers are known for urging male fighters for women's rights (e.g., abortion clinic defense guards and abortion rights demonstrators) to confess to their past porn-viewing habits and sin no more.

The meat of the "End Pornography" campaign, which is spearheaded by RCP spokeswoman Sunsara Taylor, is laid out in a 2011 "Call to Action." In this call they ludicrously claim that pornographic images are the cause of rape, murder and other violent crimes against women. They posit that there is a "culture of rape and pornography" that is reinforcing the "enslavement and degradation of women."

Keeping abreast of the latest developments, they claim U.S. culture has recently been "pornified," as evidenced by the national phenomenon of (gasp) teen sexting and women taking pole-dancing classes at gyms! Underlying this patronizing absurdity and holier-than-thou mentality is the age-old "women are victims and can't possibly enjoy sex" (or porn) garbage. For these neo-Victorian morality police, the "new" offenses in porn include depositing seminal fluid on a lady's visage, penetrating orifices in a sequence not to the RCP's liking, and other sexual practices they decry in lurid detail.

What kind of a sick cat does one have to be to determine (with some precision, mind you) which positions, organs, orifices and/or exchanges of bodily fluids are degrading and abusive rather than based on "mutual love and respect"? A very sick one, indeed. In fact, what's truly obscene in all this is Bob Avakian's diktats on "normalcy." If they would just keep it to themselves in their prayer halls, with the membership kneeling at the altar of the mind-numbing, 6-hour-plus documentary of Avakian's preachings, we wouldn't be compelled to comment on it. But the RCP's proselytizing plays right into the hands of a very real anti-sex witchhunt by the very real capitalist state.

Revolution



AP

Above: RCP's reactionary "End Pornography and Patriarchy" campaign comes to New York City, August 2012. Below: Billboard erected adjacent to sex shop in Abilene, Kansas, 2005.

In his tirades against pornography, Avakian trivializes not only the horrific crime of rape but also America's racist history of murders of black men by the Ku Klux Klan. Speaking of the photo postcards of lynchings that KKK supporters circulated in the early 20th century, Avakian outrageously claims that pornography "is the equivalent of those 'Postcards of the Hanging.' It is a means through which all women are demeaned and degraded." These words inspired Avakian's followers to produce a grotesque poster that equates images of Jim Crow lynchings with pornographic stills and a Dolce & Gahbana fashion advertisement! This shows a contemptuous disregard for KKK terror; you don't have to be a Marxist to find this absolutely repulsive.

This reactionary anti-sex campaign, which argues that the basis for women's oppression is "impure thoughts" rather than the capitalist system of exploitation, is as far from the goal of liberating women as you can get. Try telling a woman in Saudi Arabia or Iran—two countries where porn is banned—that dirty magazines and videos are the source of her oppression! Pornography is simply images and words intended for entertainment. It reflects, and only reflects, some human behavior. In this violent, irrational capitalist society, some of those reflections aren't pretty. But you can't change society by changing images on a screen. Only socialist revolution can create the economic basis to replace the institution of the family—the main source of women's oppression—and ensure genuine freedom for women.

The RCP capitulates to the pervasive religious backwardness that causes youth to suffer shame, humiliation, self-loathing and traumatic fear about activities that would otherwise be considered fun. Aping the Vatican, for years the RCP raised the slogan for "stable monogamous relationships between men and women." They still bemoan the fact that men "avoid or delay marriage" and "seek instead...to find sexual gratification without obligations, in casual encounters and through pornography/prostitution" ("A Declaration: For Women's Liberation and the Emancipation of All Humanity," *Revolution*, 8 March 2009).

The RCP couples their anti-porn tirades with a call for "Abortion on demand and without apology!" But in fact the organizers of Avakian's preachings, we wouldn't be compelled to comment on it. But the RCP's proselytizing plays right into the hands of a very real anti-sex witchhunt by the very real capitalist state.

Nina Hartley on RCP Puritanism

We print below part of a February 24 letter from Nina Hartley, porn star, author, sex educator and high-profile fighter against the censorship of sexual expression. The Spartacist League defended her and ten other women sex performers in 1993 when they were arrested and threatened with up to 12 years in prison on "felony lesbianism" charges (see "'Felony Lesbianism' in Las Vegas," WV No. 573, 9 April 1993). Young Spartacus *asked Nina to send us her views on the Revolutionary Communist Party's anti-porn crusade. We appreciate her insights.*

* * *

As a sex worker with, now, thirty years' experience, I continue to be amazed and angered at the anti-worker tone of the RCP's stance on pornography and sex work.

When I started as a sex worker I knew that religious people and institutions would hate what I do. I knew that certain factions of the Feminist movement would take issue with what I do (though their intransigence does continue to astound me) and it was disappointing that Communists would do so, as well.

I'm a sex WORKER, emphasis on the "worker." I freely chose my job and would enjoy it a lot more if the eroto-phobic, Puritanical, sex-and-men-negative attitudes did not prevail in the culture or the conversation.

In our Capitalistic society, all people must work to survive. Not all are so lucky to like their jobs, so we promote unions to at least give workers a living wage and some minimum safety on the job. In our eroto-phobic world, with its religiously based notions of "modest" and "pure womanhood," and bestial and aggressive "manhood," we create the need and the market for sexual commerce.

You'd think that the RCP would recognize Judeo-Christian notions of "natural" male and female roles/natures/places as the basis of their anti-sex and sex-worker rhetoric. They don't. They've so deeply internalized these notions as to think they're natural, and that pornography and sex work are somehow demeaning, ON THE FACE OF IT, to all sex workers.

Only those people stuck in jobs they hate are being demeaned by their jobs. People who LIKE their jobs, like their jobs.

Some of us are well-suited, emotionally and temperamentally, to sex work.

My sex-worker friends, all of whom identify as Feminists, only want the laws to change to stop their harassment by clients, police and the court system. ■

Courtesy of Nina Hartley

zation makes common cause with those whose keenest ambition is the destruction of *Roe v. Wade*. The RCP's anti-porn campaign is strikingly similar to Republican Tea Party politician Michele Bachmann's 2011 pledge to provide "humane protection of women and the innocent fruit of conjugal intimacy...from human trafficking, sexual slavery, seduction into promiscuity, and all forms of pornography and prostitution, infanticide, abortion and other types of coercion or stolen innocence.... So help us God."

Government Out of the Bedroom!

Sexuality is *personal*, not political. The capitalist rulers are the ones who politicize sexuality, victimizing those who run afoul of its writ. While raining death on Pakistani and Afghan youth, the U.S. rulers are on a domestic rampage to regiment people's sex lives in the name of "protecting the children." To wit: charging teens with distributing "child pornography" and "obscene materials to a minor" when they flirt by sexting nude pictures of themselves; arresting teenagers' adult lovers; incarcerating thousands of men who view

Time Life

1986: Reagan's attorney general Edwin Meese III delivers report calling to crack down on shops and media offering porn.

images classified as child pornography or who engage in sexual cyberspace chats with youth (or undercover cops posing as such). Porn doesn't destroy lives, but being on a sex offender registry for the rest of your life sure does. *Down with reactionary anti-sex laws! Government out of the bedroom!*

As the saying goes, "Perversion is whatever *you* don't happen to be into." It is no one's business how people get a small measure of sexual enjoyment in this otherwise miserable capitalist existence. We oppose all attempts at the puritanical censorship of pornography. Similarly, we are opposed to all laws against "crimes without victims," such as prostitution, drug use and "age of consent" laws. We advocate the concept of *effective consent*—which means that as long as all parties involved consent to the act, nobody, least of all the state, has any right to tell them they can't do it.

Who does the RCP expect will enforce their porn-abstinence campaign? In their "Call to Action" there is a fine-print disclaimer stating that (of course!) they're not looking to establish new laws to ban pornography. But words are cheap. A so-called communist organization that not only does not fight against censorship, but also encourages it, *is a pawn of the state*. When the RCP and supporters picket a sex shop, they cannot turn around the next day and protest its shuttering by the state and religious reaction. They have already taken a side.

Chairman Bob Knows It When He Sees It

What is too "obscene" to be allowed? Like U.S. Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart, who opined on pornography in a 1964 case, Chairman Bob knows it when he sees it. He had a similar reaction to women's lingerie—namely, thongs—described in his press as "hideous symbols and embodiments of the degradation of women" in the same vein as *burqas*. That's right, *burqas*! A few years ago, the RCP sponsored a speaking tour called "From the Burkha to the Thong," which equated the *burqa*, an oppressive symbol and instrument of religious reaction, with a skimpy undergarment many women (and some men, actually) enjoy wearing.

This sort of nonsense takes a page from the feminists who, for decades, made common cause with the religious right in sundry porn censorship campaigns. With its cries to "End Patriarchy," the RCP engages in contemptible pandering to feminists, pushing the idealist notion that social change is effected through moral suasion and not class struggle. Contrary to popular belief, feminism does not mean women's liberation. Rather, it places the dividing line in society as one of gender and not class, and it seeks the advancement of women to a more equal participation in government and corporations at the top of the repressive capitalist system. The bourgeois ideology of feminism is an obstacle to the real emancipation of women.

In keeping with its time-dishonored Maoist-Stalinist heritage, the RCP embraces the family. In the 1970s, the RCP,

B Dejkin

1932 Soviet poster reads, "March 8: Working Women's Day of Rebellion Against Kitchen Slavery. Down With the Oppression and Suffocation of Household Routine!"

then called the Revolutionary Union (RU), decried homosexuality—along with pornography and promiscuity—as diseases of capitalist society, and banned gays and lesbians from the organization. The RCP forebears wrote in their 1974 "Position Paper of the Revolutionary Union on Homosexuality and Gay Liberation": "Gay liberation is anti-working-class and counterrevolutionary. Its attacks on the family would rob poor and working class people of the most viable social unit for their revolutionary struggle against the imperialist system" (see "RU on Homosexuals: Malicious Maoist Bigotry," *Young Spartacus* No. 26, November 1974). This was followed by their rants in the 1980s against gay men's so-called "self-indulgent lifestyle," along with a list of practices they found highly objectionable, including pornography and casual sex.

By the beginning of the 21st century, the RCP apparently discovered that it was hard to recruit young activists while sounding like bigot Rick Santorum. So the RCP repudiated its anti-gay ban. As we later noted in our article, "RCP: Anti-Gay Moralists Then and Now" (*WV* No. 947, 20 November 2009), "The RCP's present enthusiasm for gay marriage apparently has more to do with their enthusiasm for forcing people into the stultifying institution of monogamous marriage than with any opposition to the oppression of homosexuals."

Their 2001 New Draft Programme position represented a change of line, but not a change of heart. Today they "do not see a homosexual orientation or the practice of homosexuality *per se* as something that constitutes an impediment to the emancipation of women." Then they add, "Male gay culture in bourgeois society is not a departure from—and in fact there are elements in which it is a concentration of—male right." Thus speaketh the Lord Avakian: male same-sex relationships are still assertions of male chauvinism.

Today, the RCP engages in the socially acceptable form of anti-gay bigotry: slandering the North American Man/Boy Love Association (NAMBLA) as "child molesters." NAMBLA is an organization that calls for the decriminalization of consensual relationships between adult men and minors (e.g., *Queer as Folk* TV heartthrob Brian Kinney's affair with a high school student in Season One).

Anti-pedophile hysteria is used by the state to justify the grossest intervention into people's private lives—and especially to police the behavior of youth. Despicably, almost all gay rights organizations and leftist groups refuse to defend NAMBLA, leaving it at the mercy of the capitalist state. The Spartacist League has a proud history of defending NAMBLA, opposing "age of consent" laws and all laws curtailing the privacy and sexual freedom of consenting individuals.

As porn star Nina Hartley puts it, "Sexual desire is, by its nature, unruly, chaotic, transgressive and boundary-crossing." Writing more than 50 years ago, Dr. Alfred C. Kinsey debunked the prevailing myth that monogamous, heterosexual relationships were the norm in society. Interviewing almost 18,000 people, his team laid out in undeniable detail the fact that 19 out of every 20 Americans had broken at least one law (adultery, sodomy, etc.) when having sex. Although no longer cutting such a wide swath, today's anti-sex laws still seek to force people into a sexual straitjacket and to cruelly punish transgressions (see "In Defense of Sex and Science," *WV* No. 839, 7 January 2005).

The Family: Main Source of Women's Oppression

The RCP follows the tenets of Chinese leader Mao Zedong, who advanced not only the nationalist dogma of building "socialism in one country" but also promoted the family as an ideological prop for bureaucratic caste rule. The 1949 Revolution against capitalism transformed lives and provided unprecedented opportunities for Chinese women who, in pre-revolutionary times, were barely recognized as humans. Yet there remained, as Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky put it in *The Revolution Betrayed* (1937) when describing the Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy, "the philosophy of a priest endowed also with the powers of a gendarme." Under Mao's regime, divorce was difficult to obtain, premarital sex was a crime, homosexuality was regarded as an "illness" and masturbation was warned against in mass-distributed hygiene manuals. (See "Maoism and the Family," *Women and Revolution* No. 7, Autumn 1974.)

The Maoist ideology is the legacy of

Xin Liliang

"The Happy Life Chairman Mao Gave Us": 1954 Chinese poster glorifies reactionary institution of the family.

Stalinism in the former Soviet Union. The USSR issued out of a victorious workers revolution in 1917. (This was different from China, where the peasant army under Mao led the revolution.) Following the 1924 political counterrevolution that usurped power from the working class, the Stalinist bureaucracy maintained and reinforced its parasitic caste rule by promoting social conservatism and respect for authority. The bureaucrats dredged up the old bourgeois ideology of Great Russian chauvinism and the cult of the family.

The Stalinist/Maoist glorification of the family is antithetical to V.I. Lenin and the Bolsheviks' struggle for women's liberation (see Quote on page 2), and to the entire history of the Marxist movement. In *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1884), Friedrich Engels explained that the monogamous patrilineal family arose "to make the man supreme in the family, and to propagate, as the future heirs to his wealth, children

continued on page 11

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For the Right of Gay Marriage...and Divorce!

Uproar Over Same-Sex Marriage

France

AP

Above: January 27 Paris rally supporting legalization of same-sex marriage and adoption. Below: As Catholic church and right-wing parties mobilized against gay marriage, banner of far-right Action Française at November 18 Paris demonstration read: "The Family Is the Bedrock of the Nation."

Sipa

The following article was translated from Le Bolchévik *No. 203 (March 2013), which is published by the Ligue Trotskyste de France, section of the ICL. A law legalizing gay marriage and adoption, which was passed by the National Assembly on February 12, is due to be debated in the Senate in early April.*

LE BOLCHEVIK

The LTF has joined in the recent mobilizations for "marriage for all," which are aimed at winning some degree of basic rights for gay couples, including finally the right to adopt children. In fact, the first limited legal recognition of gay couples dates back only to 1999 with the introduction of the Civil Solidarity Pact [a form of civil union]. As Marxists, we support the right of homosexuals to marry—and to divorce freely—because we are for full legal equality and democratic rights for gays, just as we support any legal advances that the working class and oppressed can wrest from the capitalists and their state. At the same time, we fight for a society in which no one is forced into a legal straitjacket to get the basic rights that capitalist society grants only to those locked in the traditional legal mold of "one man on one woman for life."

In the wake of parliament's adoption of the new bill, the Communist Party (PCF) writes that "marriage is no longer (or not exactly) a patriarchal institution, outdated and reactionary" and that "the National Assembly has revolutionized the institution of the family" (*l'Humanité*, 13 February). On the one hand the PCF captures a certain truth: the law on gay marriage is intended to adapt marriage to the reality of how people live today ***in order to better defend*** the institution of the bourgeois family. As Jean-Jacques Urvoas, the Socialist Party president of the parliamentary law commission, stated in an interview in *Le Monde* (15 January): "It is mistaken to accuse us of attacking the family when what we want is to make all families secure."

But until the day capitalism is destroyed, the function of marriage as a key pillar of the bourgeois family unit will not change. Like the oppression of women, the oppression of homosexuals is not primarily the result of right-wing reaction and social backwardness but is rooted in the institution of the family, whose historical function is to transmit private ownership of the means of production to "legitimate" heirs through inheritance. This is why France forbids single people and gay couples from using artificial insemination or medically assisted procreation (including in vitro fertilization) as well as surrogate motherhood. The family is also one of the means through which the ruling class seeks to instill respect for authority and obedience to its moral codes. Homosexuality is deemed "sinful" and "deviant" by the Catholic church and the bourgeois order because it deviates from the patriarchal structure of the monogamous one man/one woman family.

The PCF's opposition to surrogate parenthood, a practice that benefits gay men in particular, also speaks to its faith in the institution of the family. Surrogate parenthood currently carries a fine of 45,000 euros and a three-year prison sentence. It was strongly denounced by Justice Minister Christiane Taubira and the PCF's Marie-Georges Buffet during the parliamentary debates on gay marriage and is also attacked by feminists in the New Anticapitalist Party (NPA). They all argue that it commercializes women's bodies: "Giving power to a third party over a woman's pregnancy is a threat to the right to abortion. Moreover, the ability to alienate her body by a contract opens the door to the legalization of prostitution" (*Tout Est à Nous! La Revue* magazine, April 2011).

At bottom, they uphold the bourgeois model that decrees that it is the job of the woman (and not two men) to raise children. They also deny a woman's fundamental right to choose what to do with her body. If a woman decides to carry a baby for someone else, that's her decision and the state and its politicians should stay out of it. Likewise, if she becomes a prostitute to make a living rather than being exploited by some factory owner at a job where she breaks her back or suffers relentless harassment, that's her business and not something for the capitalist state to legislate.

We stand for the decriminalization of prostitution, which we regard as a "crime without a victim," like drug use, gambling, pornography, homosexual and intergenerational sex—activities that are generally illegal or heavily regulated under capitalist law. For us Marxists, the guiding principle in sexual relations is that of ***effective consent***, not age, relationship, sex, number of people or degree of intimacy. This means nothing more and nothing less than mutual agreement and understanding as opposed to coercion. As long as those who take part agree to do what they are doing, no one, least of all the state, has the right to tell them they cannot. ***State out of the bedroom!***

Homophobic Hysteria and the Fight for Democratic Rights

The church and the right-wing parties have mobilized hundreds of thousands of bigots in the streets against gay marriage. The level of homophobic hysteria can be so grotesque as to seem farcical. Take the diatribe by Dassault, a leading French capitalist, predicting the end of civilization if gay marriage became law: "There will be no more reproduction, so what is the point? Do we want a nation of gays? If so, in ten years there will be no one left; it's stupid.... Look at history, ancient Greece; it is one of the reasons for its decline" (*Le Monde online*, 7 November 2012). But some things are more sinister. The youth group of the UMP [Union for a Popular Movement of former president Nicolas Sarkozy] of the Haute Garonne *département* [administrative division] published on its Web site a photo of a hare-chested young man hanging from a rope with the words above him: "You will not be a queer, my son." All this will fuel violent assaults against gays and lesbians...as well as their kids. One out of every four homosexuals has been the victim of a physical attack over the last ten years, according to a poll conducted for the gay magazine *Têtu*. The gay rights association SOS Homophobie in its last annual report lists 29 murders in France during the past decade in which homophobia or transphobia was the motive.

A revolutionary party must vigorously make known to the workers movement all attacks and discrimination on homosexuals and every oppressed sector of the population, vigorously protesting against these assaults. Such attacks are ultimately aimed at weakening the entire working class and dividing it along sexual and racial lines, serving to strengthen the capitalist state's repressive powers and maintain capitalist rule. The working class must come to understand that in order to liberate itself from the shackles of capitalist oppression and exploitation, it must seize its historic task: to abolish class society in order to open the road to human freedom for ***everyone***.

But to mobilize the immense social power of the organized working class against capitalism necessarily means an intransigent ***political*** struggle against the leaders of the social-democratic parties of the Left Front, the NPA and others who take up the defense of the bourgeois family, albeit in its refurbished form. They promote the lie that if only sufficient pressure is applied from the streets, capitalism can be "revolutionized" and made more humane by means of a "left" government. In this way they work to preserve capitalist exploitation and the social reaction that goes with it.

Anti-Woman, Anti-Youth "Republican Values"

Given the reactionary rubbish being spewed by the right, the Socialist Hollande government has had little trouble appearing "progressive" by promoting "marriage for all" (which does not diminish its capitulation to the church and right-wing parties over in vitro fertilization). The government hopes to use this as political capital to get on with presiding over factory closures, criminalizing the trade unions and implementing the rest of its racist, anti-worker agenda without too much opposition. In Britain, it is the Conservative prime minister who has just steered a vote on gay marriage through Parliament in order to strengthen the institution of the family and also, as in Hollande's case, to give itself a "social" cover in order to better push through its relentless austerity attacks.

Justice Minister Taubira declared of the new marriage law: "Marriage for everyone well illustrates the slogan of the Republic...freedom of choice, equality of all couples, fraternity, because no differences should serve as pretexts for discrimination by the state" (*l'Humanité*, 30 January). Talk about hypocrisy! The French state, whether run by the right or the left, has no qualms over breaking up families when it comes to the working class, immigrants and other oppressed layers. A gathering in Aubervilliers recently marked the first anniversary of the deportation of Changfeng Mo, an undocumented immigrant with two young children born and educated in France, who was deported after ten years living and working in the country. ***Full citizenship rights for all immigrants and their families!*** There is, of course, no sign of "fraternity" coming from cop minister Valls to reunite this man with his family.

Or take France's latest *département*, the small island of Mayotte [part of the Comoros Islands in the Indian Ocean, near Mozambique], which in 2010 carried out 26,400 deportations, of whom 6,400 were children. This number was not far below the 33,000 immigrants deported from metropolitan France. Under Valls &

Co., the deportation machine in Mayotte continues to operate at such a pace that kids frequently come home from school to find one or both of their parents gone, taken to the transit center to await deportation. There are also several documented cases in which children have been deported without their parents by heing arbitrarily "assigned" to a stranger. ***Down with the deportations!***

For months and months we have heard politicians of the left and right swearing that they have only the best interests of children and youth at heart when at the same time all of them work to maintain the capitalist class and its machinery of state repression—the real source of violence, crime and alienation inflicted on young people in this society. In France today, a quarter of those between the ages of 16 and 24 are jobless and see little immediate prospect of getting out from under the family roof to live independently. In many *banlieue* areas [minority and working-class neighborhoods on the outskirts of big cities], the jobless figures for youth have been at 50 percent (or more) for some years now. The 2005 *banlieue* revolt spoke to this despair, particularly among male youth of minority backgrounds, who see no future for themselves outside of a McJob or more likely the unemployment office or prison. And since 2005, the situation has only gotten worse.

Today the Peugeot company and Hollande are shutting down the Aulnay car plant, historically one of the main employers for youth—albeit on lousy temporary contracts—in the "93" [a heavily minority *département* northeast of Paris]. People like Arnaud Montebourg [Socialist minister of industrial recovery] wag their fingers in the tradition of their hero, [19th-century colonialist] Jules Ferry. They lecture the workers that they need to "try harder," be more flexible and take jobs hundreds of miles from their homes. In fact, by doing that they are creating thousands more single-parent households with

Bulloz

Parisian women march on royal palace at Versailles in early months of French Revolution, October 1789.

Wongo

Mayotte, February 2011: Protesters denounce deportation of adolescents, a policy French rulers carry out while extolling "family values."

all the weight of oppression this implies, especially for women. Repeated deep cuts in education and health care budgets in recent years also weigh particularly on women and children. It is now common practice for municipalities to refuse school lunches to children of unemployed parents—sometimes their only hot meal of the day—with the state arguing that since the parents don't work the kids can go home to eat. Thus they ensure that mothers (in the main) remain jobless and isolated in the home. Free school meals and quality, 24-hour childcare for all!

The Family as a Pillar of Capitalism

The only way to begin to do away with the deep-rooted chauvinism and violence generated by the capitalist profit system against youth, women, gays, immigrants and other oppressed layers is the struggle to overthrow bourgeois rule by socialist revolution. Through the expropriation of the productive property of the capitalist class, a workers government will lay the basis for a planned economy that qualitatively expands the productive forces, eliminates scarcity and vastly expands the range and depth of scientific knowledge. Making such a leap in social productivity presupposes the international extension of the revolution, crucially in the advanced imperialist countries. Socialist revolution can then begin to lay the basis for replacing the family by providing the material means to socialize and collectivize its household functions (for example, establishing communal 24-hour childcare, kitchens, cafeterias and laundries as well as free health care).

The family originated with the development of classes. Prior to that stage of history, it was not important who the father was since children were to a large extent raised collectively by the entire community. But the invention of agriculture made it possible for the first time for people to produce more than they could consume themselves. This led to the creation of a surplus and of private property, and thus of an idle class that lived off the labor of others. In order to pass down its fortune and property to the next generation, that class had to know who the father was. This is the origin of the institution of marriage, whose goal was precisely to restrict women's sexual activity, enforcing monogamy for women (not men). Therefore by its nature the family is sexually repressive. Even today, if a woman in France wants to re-marry in the nine months following her divorce, she is legally obliged to undergo a medical examination to obtain a doctor's certificate stating that she is not pregnant. This is in line with the Civil Code, which specifies that "if a child is conceived or born during the marriage, the father is the husband."

French Revolution's Legacy for Women and Gays

To understand that social progress will only come from revolutionary struggle, it is necessary to look back and study the significant advances won during such periods for women and homosexuals and other minorities. The French Revolution of 1789 was a bourgeois revolution preserving private property, which limited the changes it introduced. Nevertheless it brought monumental progress in women's and homosexual rights, particularly during its most radical years.

As late as 1783 under the *ancien régime*, a monk was burned alive after being charged with conducting a sexual act with a boy. The penal code of 1791 removed the crime of sodomy from the books and declared it an "imaginary crime." Police surveillance of known homosexual meeting places such as the Tuileries gardens diminished markedly in the wake of the revolution.

Women had no rights whatsoever under the *ancien régime*. The monarchy constantly sought to reinforce, consolidate and extend the father's control over the marriage of his children. Women charged with committing adultery were sentenced to be publicly whipped, thrown in prison or, worst of all, sent to the convent for life. Men could not marry without parental consent, and if they married a minor (under 25 years for women) without that consent they could be sentenced to death, whether the woman consented or not. Marriage was indissoluble—a life sentence.

In 1792, the age of legal adulthood was reduced to 21 years for all and marriage without parental consent became possible. The divorce law enacted the same year was extremely liberal (even by today's standards), allowing couples to divorce by mutual consent or through either spouse declaring incompatibility. It made divorce affordable even for the poor throughout the country. In the year following the introduction of the law, 70 percent of all divorces were initiated by women. Further, a 1793 decree gave illegitimate children the right to inherit from both the mother and the father. There was also legislation accepting "free unions," so that, for example, unmarried partners of soldiers could receive government pensions. With one stroke, the institution of the family lost one of its main functions, i.e., to transfer property from one generation to another. As we wrote in "Women and the French Revolution" (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 56, Spring 2001):

> "The family was temporarily undermined in order to serve the needs of the revolution against its enemies, the feudal nobility and Catholic church. This is one demonstration of the fact that social institutions which seem to be immutable, to be 'natural' and 'eternal,' are in fact nothing more than the codification of social relations dictated by the particular economic system that is in place. After the bourgeoisie consolidated its power as the new ruling class, it re-established the constraints of the family. But nothing would ever be the same again. The contradictory reality of the French Revolution—the breathtaking leap in securing individual rights and the strict limits imposed on those rights by the fact that this was a bourgeois and not a socialist revolution—was captured by Karl Marx in *The German Ideology*:
>
> "'The existence of the family is made necessary by its connection with the mode of production, which exists independently of the will of bourgeois society. That it was impossible to do without it was demonstrated in the most striking way during the French Revolution, when for a moment the family was as good as legally abolished'."

With the Thermidorian reaction many of these gains were diminished or overturned, but the situation of women had progressed qualitatively as it also had for homosexuals; there could never be a return to the total subjugation of women that existed under the *ancien régime*. The fight for women's liberation was front and center during the Paris Commune decades later. With the establishment of the Napoleonic civil code in 1804, which consolidated the bourgeois order, various morality laws were reintroduced which were used in part to repress gay men, but there was no explicit criminalization of homosexuality in the penal code. This was why Oscar Wilde and other gay men settled in France in order to escape prison in their own countries.

Anti-Homosexual Repression After World War II

It was not until 1942 under Vichy that the Pétain government [quisling regime of the Nazi occupation] amended the law to once again explicitly criminalize homosexuality. Under the German occupation, the French police and the Gestapo rounded up homosexuals and sent them to the labor and death camps—crimes that were not recognized by a French head of state until 2005. These laws were not repealed but were reinforced under the early postwar governments under General de Gaulle and the PCF. This was the period of the "battle of production": after the devastation of the imperialist war, there were enormous social expectations and great anger among the working class. The PCF labored to save French capitalism and supported de Gaulle's "moral order." They condemned strikes and pushed workers to toil harder and longer in order to produce more profits (and also to produce children that would later work in the factories...). In 1945, de Gaulle evoked the "12 million beautiful babies that France needs in 12 years," and legislation was introduced to further strengthen the family.

In July 1945, the government voted to increase the age of consent to 15 for heterosexuals and 21 for homosexuals (previously set at eleven years old in 1832 and in 1863 at 13, for everyone). The following year, the government introduced a law targeting homosexuals whereby only people "of good moral character" could work in the civil service. In 1960, again under de Gaulle, a Gaullist parliamentarian denounced homosexuality as "a scourge against which it is our duty to protect our children," and the need to "struggle against homosexuality," alongside alcoholism, prostitution and certain illnesses like tuberculosis, was inscribed in law. This amendment did not produce the slightest debate.

It was only in the wake of the May 1968 upheaval that anything changed. In May '68, youth rose up against de Gaulle's stultifying moral order, sparking strikes and factory occupations that threatened the capitalist order. Women and homosexuals once again began to make advances in their democratic rights. Already during May '68, attempts were made to create a Revolutionary Committee of Gay Action, but its leaflets posted at the Sorbonne university were torn down. In subsequent years, homosexual organizations such as the FHAR (Homosexual Front of Revolutionary Action) were set up, fighting centrally for gay rights but also for the right to abortion and contraception and in opposition to the age-of-consent laws. These organizations gave unprecedented visibility to the fight for gay rights. They

continued on page 10

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France...

(continued from page 9)

participated in the labor movement's traditional May Day demonstrations, although not without hostility from the leaders of the PCF at that time. Speaking of the FHAR's participation in the 1972 May Day demonstration, the PCF's Roland Leroy wrote in *l'Humanité*: "This riffraff does not represent the vanguard of society but the rottenness of capitalism in its decay."

But it was the refusal of the workers movement (centrally the PCF) to embrace the fight for gay rights that led to the development of petty-bourgeois sectoralism, i.e., a view that the fight for gay rights was a separate issue, to be engaged mainly by those concerned. Today's gay rights groups have few links with and are often hostile to the workers movement and class struggle, the only means by which gay liberation can be won. Finally in 1974, access to contraception was opened up, including for minors, and the Pill reimbursed by the national health care system. A year later, abortion was legalized. Then between 1980 and 1982, under [conservative president] Giscard d'Estaing followed by [Socialist president François] Mitterrand, the laws criminalizing homosexuality were also for the most part repealed at last.

Gay rights activists march in 1971 May Day demonstration in Paris.

The Russian Revolution and Social Emancipation

For Marxists, contrary to gay rights organizations like the FHAR in the 1970s or groups like Act Up today, there is no special program for homosexuals. The communist program includes demands that address the special oppression of gays, and we understand that the fate of homosexuals—like all other oppressed groups—is determined by the class struggle. But under capitalism, gains and advances are reversible and social reaction is always strengthened during periods of economic crises, as can be seen today.

Only a socialist revolution can lay the basis for definitively putting an end to social oppression. Our model is the 1917 October Revolution, led by the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky. Immediately after the seizure of power, the Soviet workers state began to undercut the old bourgeois prejudices and social institutions responsible for the oppression of women and homosexuals. The Bolsheviks abolished all legal impediments to women's equality and all laws against homosexual acts and other consensual sexual activity. Their position was explained in a 1923 pamphlet by Dr. Grigorii Batkis, Director of the Moscow Institute for Sexual Hygiene, titled "The Sexual Revolution in Russia" (see also "The Russian Revolution and the Emancipation of Women," *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 59, Spring 2006):

> "[The new Soviet legislation] declares the absolute non-interference of the state and society into sexual matters, so long as nobody is injured, and no one's interests are encroached upon.... Concerning homosexuality, sodomy, and various other forms of sexual gratification, which are set down in European legislation as offenses against public morality—Soviet legislation treats these exactly the same as so-called 'natural' intercourse. All forms of sexual intercourse are private matters."

For the Bolsheviks, women's emancipation was an integral part of the emancipation of the working class itself, not something subordinate to it. The Bolsheviks, informed by their Marxist program for women's liberation, sought to build socialized alternatives to the family, within the limits of their capacity in backward Russia. The country had been bled white by World War I and the civil war that broke out soon after the October Revolution and was under the immense pressure of hostile imperialist encirclement. They struggled, amid the harsh economic situation, to provide the material and economic means to abolish the family unit and release women from the isolation of childcare and domestic work. These glimmers of a new society and an end to the oppression of women and gays later faded under the political counterrevolution led by Stalin in 1923-24 in the context of the isolation of the young workers state. In 1934 a law was passed punishing homosexuality with imprisonment, and in 1936 abortion was outlawed.

Sexuality is not in itself a political question. It is the bourgeoisie that politicizes this issue by victimizing those who do not fit the norms established by the family, church and state. We seek to carry forward the program of Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks and to mobilize the proletariat in defense of the rights of all the oppressed as part of the fight to overturn capitalism through socialist revolution. To create genuinely free and equal relations among people in all spheres, including sex, requires nothing less than the destruction of capitalist class rule and the creation of a communist world. ■

Kimani Gray...

(continued from page 12)

a field day, portraying the outpouring of visceral anger as "rioting." On March 13, with police helicopters swarming overhead, at least 46 protesters were arrested, mostly for disorderly conduct, as they attempted to march to the 67th Precinct. Kimani's sister, Mahnefah, was nabbed by cops while crossing the street and only released after protesters chanted: "That's the sister!" She was eventually let off with a summons. We demand: ***Drop all charges against the protesters!***

Kimani Gray's fate is the lethal result of the NYPD "stop and frisk" campaign, which last year alone victimized ***over half a million people***, the overwhelming majority of them black or Latino. Indicating just how sweeping this policy is, one speaker at a Kimani Gray protest pointed out that there is now a cell phone app that sends details of a victim's ordeal directly to the New York Civil Liberties Union! Sandra Mitchelin, a protest organizer whose 14-year-old daughter went to school with Kimani, said, "The whole community is fed up.... These were 13, 14, 15-year olds at a party. It never deserved to go down how it went down." Spartacist League comrades at one protest noted that older residents had come out in part to protect youth from the cops' menacing presence.

As is true across the country, the cops in NYC act as an army of occupation in the ghettos and barrios as they enforce capitalist "law and order" against the entire working class. No amount of "overhaul" or "sensitivity training" will ever change that. What should be happening now is massive labor-centered protest on the streets to unite the social power of the working class with the anger of the ghetto and barrio masses. New York City is a union town with a multiracial working class—black, white, Latino, Asian; native-born and immigrant. Many of these union members know that Kimani Gray could have been their son.

Black bourgeois politicians have had to move fast to try to quell the anger of the people they claim to represent. Democratic city councilman Jumaane Williams, whose district includes East Flatbush, pleaded with Mayor Bloomberg and Police Commissioner Kelly to come there to repair "police and community relations." While Williams welcomes the racist top cops to the neighborhood, he tells anti-racist protesters to get lost, tweeting, "Furious at adults from OUTSIDE the community who incite our angry young people!!!" So to keep a lid on things, Williams regurgitates the kind of "outside agitator" charge that sheriffs and Klansmen 50 years ago threw out at civil rights activists for "stirring up" black people in the Jim Crow South. And people in East Flatbush aren't buying it. "Ask the youth in the community what they want!" said one man at a Williams press conference. "Investigate the investigators!" called out a union steamfitter.

City Councilman Charles Barron, the Democratic Party's in-house "militant," intoned at a March 12 protest that "we are fighting capitalism," and that the real crimes are poverty, unemployment and racist institutions. But this was just his usual attempt to get ahead of the anger in the community. The next day, Barron said that instead of just buying the cops' story, there needs to be more investigation "to see if the shooting was justified" (*Amsterdam News*, 13 March). So Barron tells people to dig around looking for "justification" for cops blowing away a 16-year-old kid. He and Jumaane Williams play the same game: derailing anger at the murderous injustice of the racist capitalist system into "responsible" channels, or, as Williams put it, "to channel the anger properly" (*New York Times*, 14 March). While the reformist Workers World Party lauds Barron, the one-time member of the Black Panther Party, as a "revolutionary," as a Democrat Barron is no less a representative of the capitalist ruling class than his nemesis, billionaire mayor Bloomberg.

Police Commissioner Kelly has said that there was "nothing to indicate that this shooting was outside the guidelines." Indeed, by the standards of bourgeois legality, the cops who killed Kimani Gray—and Sean Bell in 2006 and Ramarley Graham last year—were doing the job they are paid to do: to protect the interests of the tiny class of fabulously wealthy capitalist exploiters that lords it over working people and the poor. The hard truth is that the only way to eliminate police brutality is to do away with the capitalist system.

Whether run by Democratic or Republican administrations, the same system that has thrown millions of workers out of their jobs and homes over the last five years offers nothing but contempt—and certainly no future—for the masses of black and Latino youth. Brooklyn Democratic state assemblyman Dov Hikind drove this home with a vengeance last month when, to celebrate the Jewish holiday of Purim, he donned an Afro wig, brown make-up and a jersey and sunglasses to dress up as a black basketball player—with a photo posted on Facebook. Hikind smugly dismissed the outrage his racist minstrel routine touched off as "political correctness."

As we wrote after the execution of Oscar Grant, a young black worker, by a transit cop in Oakland in 2009:

> "To really change the systematic demonization and degradation of black youth trapped in ever more hellish conditions requires shattering the entire system of racist American capitalism, in which the subjugation and segregation of the majority of the black population at the bottom of this society is rooted. Only then will it be possible to eliminate the material roots of black oppression through the integration of black people into an egalitarian socialist society based on a collectivized economy, with jobs and quality housing, health care and education for all."
>
> —"Racist Police Terror U.S.A.," *WV* No. 935, 24 April 2009

Above all, what needs to be done is to build a workers party that understands that it took a Civil War—the Second American Revolution—to smash chattel slavery and that it will take a third, socialist American revolution to finally achieve black liberation. ■

Stewart...

(continued from page 12)

surgery and the urgent necessity of care and recovery.

It amounts to cruel and unusual punishment, in violation of human rights.

There is immediate remedy available for Lynne Stewart. Under the 1984 Sentencing Act, after a prisoner request, the Bureau of Prisons can file a motion with the Court to reduce sentences "for extraordinary and compelling reasons." Life threatening illness is foremost among these and Lynne Stewart meets every rational and humane criterion for compassionate release.

To misconstrue the gravamen of this compassionate release by conditioning such upon being at death's door—released, if at all, solely to die—is a cruel mockery converting a prison sentence, wholly undeserved, into a death sentence.

The New York Times, in an editorial (2/12), has excoriated the Bureau of Prisons for their restrictive crippling of this program. In a 20-year period, the Bureau released a scant 492 persons—an average of 24 a year out of a population that exceeds 220,000.

We cry out against the bureaucratic murder of Lynne Stewart.

We demand Lynne Stewart's immediate release to receive urgent medical care in a supportive environment indispensable to the prospect of her survival and call upon the Bureau of Prisons to act immediately.

If Lynne's original sentence of 28 months had not been unreasonably, punitively increased to ten years, she would be home now—where her medical care would be by her choice and where those who love her best would care for her. Her isolation from this loving care would end.

Prevent this cruelty to Lynne Stewart whose lifelong commitment to justice is now a struggle for her life.

Free Lynne Stewart Now!

Ralph Poynter and Family

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U.S. Terror Machine...

(continued from page 1)

authorization. The *Times* editorialists worry mainly that the greatly enhanced powers of the executive will someday be wielded by one less enlightened than the former constitutional law professor Obama—namely, a Republican less to their liking.

Whatever their policy differences at various times, the Democratic and Republican parties are united in furthering the interests of U.S. imperialism against the exploited and oppressed around the world. During the recent "sequestration" circus, there was bipartisan consensus that the U.S. military could stand some trimming, particularly now that the Iraq occupation is officially over and the deployment of troops to Afghanistan is coming to a close. Of course, any cuts to the Pentagon budget that Washington comes up with would still leave the U.S. as the overwhelmingly predominant military force on the planet. There is also bipartisan consensus on the strategic military "pivot" toward Asia announced last year by Obama, the primary target of which is the Chinese deformed workers state. The retailing of endless scare stories about Chinese "cyberattacks" is above all a means for the administration to justify its increased belligerence toward China.

Blood-Soaked American "Democracy"

The *New York Times* has apparently decided that it, too, lacked some transparency in regard to Army Private Bradley Manning. After providing WikiLeaks with a trove of classified material documenting U.S. imperialist crimes and duplicity, Manning was thrown into a military brig three years ago, suffering enormous abuse, and now faces a potential life sentence. Last month, *WV* wrote a letter to Margaret Sullivan, the *Times*' Public Editor, noting the omission of any mention of Bradley Manning in two February 9 articles condemning cover-ups in the drone program and charging that this was "simply cowardice on the part of the *Times*" (see *WV* No. 1018, 22 February). With his court martial approaching, Manning confessed on February 28 to having released the materials to WikiLeaks after unsuccessfully trying to interest the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*.

Judging by Sullivan's subsequent article "The Danger of Suppressing the Leaks" (9 March), we were not alone in calling attention to Manning's disappearance by this major bourgeois mouthpiece. Sullivan's column notes that the military has charged Manning with "aiding the enemy" for breaking through the wall of official secrecy. The next day, the *Times* ran an op-ed piece by Bill Keller, its former executive editor, which suggested that the *Times* might well have suppressed many of the files and would certainly feel no obligation to come to his defense in any case.

In "Hail Bradley Manning! Free Him Now!" (*WV* No. 1019, 8 March), we wrote: "In lifting a bit of the veil of secrecy and lies with which the capitalist rulers cover their depredations, Bradley Manning performed a great service to workers and oppressed around the world. All who oppose the imperialist barbarity and machinations revealed in the material he provided must join in demanding his immediate freedom." Manning's admission to being the source of the leaks has garnered him wider support, forcing even the *Times* to take note. With his trial slated to begin on June 3 at Fort Meade, Maryland, his supporters should turn out to demand his immediate freedom.

One writer in the bourgeois media who has given Manning extensive coverage is Glenn Greenwald. In a March 4 speech at Brooklyn College, the London *Guardian* columnist observed that the torture of Manning by the U.S. military was intended as a message to chill political dissent. In condemning the open-ended "war on terror," Greenwald noted, among other things, how what started as a crackdown on immigrants from the Muslim world after September 11 became a far broader net of repression, even extending into the Occupy protests.

Chicago Black Panther Party residence after 1969 FBI/police raid that killed Fred Hampton, Mark Clark.

The civil libertarian Greenwald painted a picture of democracy dying after September 11. But attacks on the working class, minorities and perceived political opponents of the ruling class are built into the very fabric of this "democracy," which is but a veil over the class dictatorship of the capitalist exploiters. As Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin taught:

> "There is not a single state, however democratic, which has no loopholes or reservations in its constitution guaranteeing the bourgeoisie the possibility of dispatching troops against the workers, of proclaiming martial law, and so forth, in case of a 'violation of public order,' and actually in case the exploited class 'violates' its position of slavery and tries to behave in a non-slavish manner."
>
> —*The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky* (1918)

U.S. history is replete with the intentional slaughter of citizens, from gunning down workers in strike battles to cops shooting black youth in the streets. As a Spartacist comrade said in the discussion period following Greenwald's talk: "I have a memory of what American capitalism is all about: Black Panthers killed in their beds while they're asleep, 1969, Chicago; internment of Japanese Americans. These are not excesses. The deception and the repression are inherent within the capitalist system. It has to be abolished through fighting for workers revolution."

In the last five years, millions of workers in the U.S., and many more around the world, have lost their livelihoods and even their homes due to the grinding capitalist economic crisis. The enormous tensions between the tiny class of exploiters and the mass of people at the base of society are the seeds of future sharp class battles. When the workers are propelled into struggle against their conditions, they will be confronted with the exercise of naked state repression. This underscores the crucial need for the proletariat to oppose all imperialist wars and occupations and all domestic measures strengthening the capitalist state apparatus. The principal task for Marxists is to forge a revolutionary workers party—a tribune of the people—to lead the proletariat in sweeping away capitalist class rule and replacing it with a workers government. ■

WV Photo

February 2002: Oakland united-front protest initiated by Labor Black League and Partisan Defense Committee against Patriot Act and Maritime Security Act.

Young Spartacus

Avakian...

(continued from page 7)

indisputably his own." Under capitalism, the family remains the central source of the oppression of women and is crucial in ensuring that the bourgeoisie's property is transmitted from one generation to the next through "legitimate" heirs.

For the working class, the nuclear family means breeding and raising the next generation of wage slaves for the ruling class, the drudgery of housework, the caring for the sick and aged, as well as the instilling of bourgeois morals and ideology needed to reinforce obedience to authority. That is why any deviation, like gay rights and the right to abortion, is seen as a threat to the family.

The oppressive institution of the family cannot simply be abolished. It is necessary to replace the family as a legal and economic unit, as part of the transition to a classless, communist society. Through the creation of alternative institutions that would collectively perform the work now performed by women in the home, we aspire to emancipate women from the endless drudgery (as full-time babysitter, cook, washerwoman, housecleaner, etc.) and from the social, cultural and political isolation imposed upon them by the family structure. In order to achieve this, the working class, with women as a crucial component within it, must smash the bourgeois state and lay the basis for a planned, collectivized economy. ***For women's liberation through socialist revolution!***

Both men and women workers are oppressed by the daily violence of capitalist exploitation—poverty, hunger, untreated illness, homelessness and alienating labor. But the sanctimonious RCP would have you believe that the main problem in society today is "objectified" women vs. their working-class brothers who allegedly "corrupt their humanity" by enjoying images that Chairman Bob and Sunsara Taylor disapprove of.

During its (now defunct) World Can't Wait campaign, the RCP's dividing line was the purportedly "fascist" Bush Regime vs. the Whole World that just couldn't wait to drive him out and put the Democrats in office. Now they've got the world they fought for: capitalist rule by the *other* party of the class enemy. And what does the RCP have to show for its efforts? Two million people rotting away in prison, 1.5 million immigrants deported and thousands dead in Obama's drone strikes.

The common thread is that the opportunistic RCP, absent any working-class compass to guide it, seeks out alien class forces: here the capitalist party of the class enemy, there the anti-sex wing of the petty-bourgeois feminists, everywhere the amorphous mass they call "the people." The RCP will embrace anything and everything *except* a proletarian class axis. While the RCP persists in its reformist and puritanical campaigns, the Spartacist League and its youth auxiliary, the Spartacus Youth Clubs, carry forward the programmatic struggle for women's liberation through socialist revolution. ■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

East Flatbush: Anger Erupts, Cops Lay Siege

Kimani Gray Killed in Cold Blood by NYPD

MARCH 17—Fresh from celebrating a friend's "sweet 16" party, black teenager Kimani Gray was gunned down by the NYPD near his home in East Flatbush, Brooklyn. As the 16-year-old hung out with friends on the evening of March 9, undercover cops who saw him "adjusting his waistband in a suspicious manner" sprang out of an unmarked car and surrounded him. Kimani screamed, "Stop, I'm not running!" seconds before seven bullets tore through his body, three from the back. As the youth pleaded with the unidentified cops, "Please don't let me die," one of them snarled, "Stay down or we'll shoot you again." He was pronounced dead at the hospital.

As news of the coldblooded execution spread, the neighborhood erupted in anger. The police quickly put out a report that Kimani had pointed a .38-caliber revolver, which cops claim to have recovered at the scene. Tishana King, who witnessed the killing from her apartment window, said that Kimani had nothing in his hands. She was just one of many neighborhood residents, including Kimani's family, who countered the police claim that the youth was armed. His mother, Carol Gray, asked tearfully at a news conference, "Why was Kimani saying, 'You got me. I'm down. Don't shoot no more?' Why was Kimani saying that, if Kimani had a weapon to point at the officer?"

The cops who gunned down Kimani—one Latino and one of Egyptian origin—were given hospital treatment for "trauma" and ringing in the ears from the barrage of bullets they fired and, as usual, were given time off ("administrative duty"). Meanwhile the gutter press, as mouthpieces for the killers-in-blue, has put *Kimani on trial*. After a media barrage seeking to justify his killing through allegations that he was in the Bloods gang and had a prior record, his high school principal responded by issuing a letter to parents, staff and students praising Kimani's academic progress and calling him an "energetic, kind, playful, independent young man."

Cops arrest protester following vigil for Kimani Gray in East Flatbush, March 13.

A *New York Post* (14 March) editorial grotesquely blared: "Blame Kimani Gray: The Cops Were Doing Their Job." This is the raw expression of American capitalism's impulse to genocide of black people, who have been kept on the bottom since they were brought to this country in chains. Today, inner-city black youth are overwhelmingly deemed an expendable population to be warehoused in prisons or shot down in the street. Each evening since the killing, residents of the heavily black working-class neighborhood, where many families come from the Caribbean, have joined with young activists to show their outrage, chanting "NYPD, KKK, how many kids did you kill today?" Area residents remember that just last June, 23-year-old Shantel Davis was shot dead by a cop a few blocks from where Kimani Gray was gunned down.

Protesters have been met with a massive deployment of cops in full riot gear, subjected to pepper-spray and baton attacks. With the neighborhood locked down, businesses are complaining that they have no customers. After some shops and cars were vandalized, the bourgeois press had

continued on page 10

Appeal by Husband of Imprisoned Leftist Lawyer

Lynne Stewart Critically Ill—Free Her Now!

The Partisan Defense Committee joins with the family of Lynne Stewart, whose cancer has metastasized, in calling for her immediate release from prison. To date, prison authorities have refused all requests for her to receive medical care outside the walls of America's dungeons. In response to a January letter from the PDC, the warden of the Federal Medical Center in Carswell, Texas, where the 73-year-old Stewart is incarcerated, admitted that she is dying. But in the same breath he coldly stated that "a terminal illness is a life expectancy of one year or less," concluding that by the state's sadistic logic she does not qualify for compassionate release.

The PDC—a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people—has defended Stewart since she was first indicted over a decade ago. The government went after her for vigorously defending her client, an Islamist cleric, concocting the charge of conspiracy to provide material support to terrorism. After Stewart's original sentence was quadrupled in 2010, we wrote: "This is a loud affirmation by the Obama administration that there will be no letup in the massive attacks on democratic rights under the 'war on terror'" ("Vindictive Transfer to Texas Prison: Free Lynne Stewart Now!" *WV* No. 975, 4 March 2011).

lynnestewart.org

We print below a petition by Stewart's husband, Ralph Poynter, and family, available at lynnestewart.org. The PDC has signed the petition as well as contributed to her legal defense, and we encourage our readers to do the same. Send donations to: Lynne Stewart Organization, 1070 Dean Street, Brooklyn, New York 11216. Those wishing to correspond can send letters to: Lynne Stewart, #53504-054, Federal Medical Center, Carswell, P.O. Box 27137, Fort Worth, TX 76127.

* * *

Lynne Stewart has devoted her life to the oppressed—a constant advocate for the countless many deprived in the United States of their freedom and their rights.

Unjustly charged and convicted for the "crime" of providing her client with a fearless defense, the prosecution of Lynne Stewart is an assault upon the basic freedoms of us all.

After years of post-conviction freedom, her bail was revoked arbitrarily and her imprisonment ordered, precluding surgery she had scheduled in a major New York hospital.

The sinister meaning of the relentless persecution of Lynne Stewart is unmistakably clear. Given her age and precarious health, the ten-year sentence she is serving is a virtual death sentence.

Since her imprisonment in the Federal Prison in Carswell, Texas her urgent need for surgery was delayed 18 months—so long, that the operating physician pronounced the condition as "the worst he had seen."

Now, breast cancer, which had been in remission prior to her imprisonment, has reached Stage Four. It has appeared in her lymph nodes, on her shoulder, in her bones and her lungs.

Her daughter, a physician, has sounded the alarm: "Under the best of circumstances, Lynne would be in a battle of the most serious consequences with dangerous odds. With cancer and cancer treatment, the complications can be as debilitating and as dangerous as the cancer itself."

In her current setting, where trips to physicians involve attempting to walk with ten pounds of shackles on her wrists and ankles, with connecting chains, Lynne Stewart has lacked ready access to physicians and specialists under conditions compatible with medical success.

It can take weeks to see a medical provider in prison conditions. It can take weeks to report physical changes and learn the results of treatment; and when held in the hospital, Lynne has been shackled wrist and ankle to the bed.

This medieval "shackling" has little to do with any appropriate prison control. She is obviously not an escape risk.

We demand abolition of this practice for all prisoners, let alone those facing

continued on page 10

WORKERS VANGUARD

50¢

No. 1021 5 April 2013

Hands Off Syria, Iran!

Obama in Israel: Stomping on the Palestinians

The overriding purpose of Barack Obama's trip to Israel, the West Bank and Jordan in late March was to further U.S. imperialist designs in the turbulent Near East. Reaffirming Washington's commitment to its Israeli junior partners, Obama promised to extend—through 2027—the billions that the U.S. provides every year to the Zionist state. When Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu called for a "credible threat of military action" to snuff out Iran's purported nuclear weapons program, Obama reiterated that indeed "all options are on the table." As Obama threw some bones to Netanyahu, he kicked the oppressed Palestinians in the teeth, issuing paeans to Zionism and laying a wreath at the grave of the movement's founder, Theodor Herzl. Long forgotten was the call Obama had raised early in his first term for a "freeze" on new Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories.

Obama won plaudits for a speech in which he told Jewish youth to see their society through Palestinians' eyes. Obama himself got a taste of how Palestinians view him when he visited the West Bank city of Ramallah and was met by protesters, many of them carrying pictures of Obama in an Israeli military uniform under the words "No Hope." In Ramallah, U.S. imperialism's Commander-in-Chief tried to push Palestinian Authority president Mahmoud Abbas into the charade of "negotiations" with Netanyahu even as Zionist settlers, backed by the Israeli government and its military forces, continue to gobble up ever more Palestinian land. In return for unblocking $500 million in aid to the Palestinian Authority, Obama pressed Abbas to refrain from submitting any grievances against Israeli settlement expansion to the International Criminal Court. While Obama cynically invoked the goal of an "independent Palestinian state," Zionist land grabs have hardly left enough territory for even the figment of a viable Palestinian state.

Since the Israeli state was founded in 1948, its very existence has been predicated on the displacement and brutal oppression of the Palestinian people. Today, well over half of the West Bank has been confiscated from Palestinians or closed off to them. This includes land occupied by murderous settlers, land cut off by the wall surrounding the West Bank and land used for "bypass roads" and military zones that are off-limits to Palestinians. With more than half a million settlers already occupying the West Bank and East Jerusalem, Tel Aviv announced plans in November for the construction of more than 3,000 additional housing units that would essentially cut off access between East Jerusalem and Ramallah and the rest of the West Bank. When trying to get to work, school or a hospital, West Bank residents must contend with more than 500 military checkpoints and barriers where they are subjected to humiliation, fear and abuse. Teachers and health care workers recently struck over not being paid by the Palestinian Authority, which depends on Israel to collect and remit its taxes and customs duties.

Reuters (top), Demotix

Top: President Obama and Israeli prime minister Netanyahu view Iron Dome missile defense battery, built with U.S. aid, at Tel Aviv airport, March 20. Above: Palestinians protest Obama's visit to West Bank, March 19.

While forcibly ghettoizing the West Bank Palestinians, the Zionist rulers long ago transformed Gaza into what is essentially a concentration camp for Palestinians, surrounded by an electric fence, a wall and the Mediterranean. Almost 80 percent of the population in Gaza is dependent on humanitarian aid for their survival. Infant mortality in the West Bank and Gaza is roughly seven times that in Israel, and life expectancy of those Palestinians is almost *nine years* less than that of Israelis.

The decades-long "peace process" that comes and goes under U.S. auspices has meant nothing but increased misery and oppression for the Palestinian masses. Some 4,500 Palestinians are locked away in Israeli dungeons, where torture is rampant. In February, protests erupted following the death of Arafat Jaradat, a 30-year-old father arrested for throwing stones during a protest. Jaradat died after being brutally beaten by his jailers. Demonstrators were also spurred by a long-term hunger strike carried out by four Palestinian political detainees. The men were imprisoned under the system of "administrative detention" by which Israel holds many Palestinians indefinitely, without a trial or even formal charges. Last month, one of the hunger strikers, a West Bank resident, was released to forced exile in Gaza; another, Samer Issawi, has continued his hunger strike and is reportedly in critical condition.

The Israeli state is backed to the hilt by the Democratic and Republican parties of U.S. imperialism and is supported as well by the rulers of Germany and other capitalist powers. To defend its interests in the oil-rich Near East, U.S. imperialism each year pumps some $3 billion in military aid to Israel and has long provided over $1 billion annually to Egypt, and is continuing to do so with the Muslim Brotherhood's Mohamed Morsi at the helm. Workers internationally must demand: All Zionist troops and settlers out of the West Bank and East Jerusalem! Down with U.S. aid to Israel, Egypt!

Imperialist Machinations

The unexpected news during Obama's trip was his orchestrating a phone call from the airport tarmac in which Netanyahu apologized to the prime minister of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, for the May 2010 Israeli marine attack on the Turkish ship *Mavi Marmara* that killed nine activists. The ship had been attempting to deliver humanitarian supplies to Gaza, which is squeezed by a blockade imposed by Israel (and abetted by Egypt) after Hamas militarily took control there in 2007. With Netanyahu's apology and agreement to compensate the families of the marines' victims, relations are being patched between these strategic allies of U.S. imperialism.

What drove Obama in brokering this deal was the ongoing civil war in Syria, which has now spilled over into neighboring countries. Turkey has been the staging point for transmitting arms and other material to the imperialist-backed Syrian rebels, many of them Islamic fundamentalists, who are fighting to overthrow the murderous bourgeois regime of Bashar al-Assad. Sunni groups from other Muslim countries, who often seem to be as intent on waging communal war against Syria's myriad religious minorities as they are in

continued on page 10

SPARTACIST FORUM 4

150 YEARS SINCE THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION...6

14 February 2013

Dear *Workers Vanguard*:

Issue No. 1015 of WV reprinted the 1989 *Spartacist* article on the Second Amendment concerning the right to form militias (usually mislabeled as the right to bear arms). The article states: "American colonial revolutionaries wanted the whole people armed...in order to be able to *kill British soldiers* and to forestall the threat of any standing army."

Since the British surrender at Yorktown in 1783 effectively ended the American Revolution, it is not strictly true that the Second Amendment had to do with killing British soldiers. This telescopes historical events and leaves out the single most critical event in prompting the adoption of the Constitution (1787) and the Bill of Rights (1789): what is known as Shays' Rebellion, in the winter of 1786-87.

Leonard Richards' excellent 2002 book, *Shays's Rebellion: the American Revolution's Final Battle*, is based on a detailed demographic analysis of some 4,000 members of "Shays' Rebellion." Burdened by crippling taxes and lawsuits that put many people into debtor's prison, much of Western Massachusetts rose up in the fall of 1786 and closed down court sessions whenever they were meeting. They referred to themselves as Regulators whose goal was "the Suppressing of tyrannical government in Massachusetts State" (P. 63).

Gun Rights and Shays' Rebellion

Culver

1786-87 Shays' Rebellion in Massachusetts.

Daniel Shays was a heavily decorated eight-year veteran officer of the American Revolution and had been presented with a gold-handled sword by Lafayette, under whom he served. The core of the Shays' officer corps was long-time veterans of the Revolution, not a bunch of poor disgruntled debt-ridden farmers. The insurrection was extremely popular. In fact, when the State sent an army of about 1,000 men to suppress Shays, someone suggested they vote on supporting the insurrection. 800 men moved to the side of the road supporting Shays (12).

Prior to Shays' Rebellion, efforts to adopt a centralized Constitution had failed. However, the specter of Shays' Rebellion crystallized antidemocratic sentiment. Proponents of the Constitution justified it as necessary to limit the "excess of democracy" (134). Reports of the rebellion so concerned George Washington that he agreed to attend the constitutional convention in Philadelphia because, as Richards puts it, "the country desperately needed a stronger national government, one that could maintain order, one that could protect property holders like him, one that could suppress malcontents like those in Massachusetts."

At first it was not at all clear that it would pass. In addition to the notorious "compromise" characterizing slaves as being only 3/5 of a person (which effectively gave control of the government to the South for the next 60 years), the Federalist supporters of the Constitution behind Alexander Hamilton succeeded in sticking a "Shaysites" label on all opponents of the Constitution.

One of the main arguments of those opposing the Constitution was that it had no Bill of Rights, a staple of English law, as the *Spartacist* article points out. The agreement to add a bill of rights to the constitution was probably the key factor in providing the narrow margin by which the Massachusetts convention approved it.

In short, Shays' Rebellion was a key factor both in frightening the nascent bourgeoisie into adopting the Constitution and providing the impetus for the Bill of Rights. The Second Amendment is not about the right of an individual to go hunting or target shooting, but the right to organize an armed militia to "suppress tyrannical government."

Fraternally,
John H.

***WV* replies:**

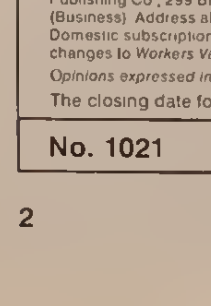
John H. points out that Shays' Rebellion in Western Massachusetts helped convince leaders of both the Southern slavocracy and the Northern merchant bourgeoisie that a new centralized federal government was necessary. It is also true that in parts of Massachusetts a significant portion of the population both sympathized with Shays and distrusted the Constitution. As to the Second Amendment, the right to bear arms was widely accepted in the English-speaking world well before Shays' Rebellion, as were the other rights codified in the Bill of Rights. And in fact, the Second Amendment did have to do with combating British military forces, which would continue to pose a threat to the young republic for some years after Yorktown.

The intent of the amendment was to provide for a people's militia as against a standing army. At the same time, as the *Spartacist* article excerpted in *WV* No. 1015 (11 January) underlined, "The right to 'keep and bear arms' was universally recognized as an *individual* right" by American colonial revolutionaries. This was part of the heritage of the English bourgeois revolution of the mid 17th century. The article noted: "Carrying forward the English tradition, the American revolutionaries expanded on this right, in light of their own experience in struggle against the British king, when they drew up the Constitution."

The roots of the right to bear arms go back to the Middle Ages. As early as the 13th century, England's yeoman farmers, who served in wars for "king and country," were encouraged to arm themselves with longbows, the preeminent weapon of the time. During the Hundred Years War, batteries of yeoman archers were decisive in defeating the French at the battles of Crécy (1346) and Agincourt (1415). Of note is that England had a substantial population of free peasants, i.e., not feudal vassals. As early as the 15th century, the peasants were compelled by royal decree to personally own a longbow and to participate in weekly target practice. This obligation was widely resented, particularly since it meant being available to serve in militias. The customary practice of bearing arms was formalized as a "true, ancient, and indubitable" right in the 1689 Bill of Rights that issued from the English bourgeois revolution.

The right to bear arms is bound up with *social defense*—that is, safeguarding the interests of a class, nation or other social entity. The American Revolution itself began when British soldiers tried to confiscate weapons in Lexington, Massachusetts, in 1775. By 1777, several states had adopted their own declarations of rights guaranteeing the right to bear arms. Massachusetts followed suit in 1780, before Shays' Rebellion.

But, as the *Spartacist* article noted: "As in any class society, there were some big, categorical exceptions to these 'universal' rights." Like everything else about the American Revolution, the Second Amendment is particularly complicated by the fact that slavery was the bedrock of much of the country's economy. The assumption was that white English-speaking Protestants were the ones wielding the guns. The Bill of Rights was adopted to placate



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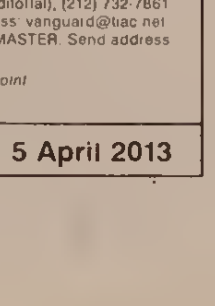

LENIN

Defending Labor Against Capitalist Assault

In early 1947, the Political Committee of the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party passed the resolution excerpted below on its tasks regarding the trade unions. On the heels of the largest strike wave in U.S. history, the government had embarked on an anti-labor offensive that led to the June 1947 Taft-Hartley Act, which banned militant union tactics and sought to purge reds from organized labor. Today as then, the fight to defend the unions requires struggling against the class collaborationism of the labor bureaucracy, which subordinates the unions to bourgeois politicians and the capitalist state.

The trade union bureaucracy has always been the most dangerous agency of the capitalist ruling class inside the ranks of labor. In their habits of life, in their social ideas and political outlook these capitalist-minded officials are very little different from the members of the National Association of Manufacturers. Within the unions the bureaucrats willingly undertake the assignment of disciplining the workers for the bosses, curbing their militancy, and restricting the functions of the unions within the narrowest economic limits. This role of the bureaucracy was driven home to many workers during the war when the union officialdom served as policemen for the government inside the trade unions, enforcing their no-strike pledge and shielding the employers against the just grievances of the workers.

Today the bureaucrats are cowering before the monopolist assault upon the rights of labor. In fact, a section of the union bureaucracy secretly welcomes some parts of the legislation before Congress which they themselves could use as weapons against the militancy of the rank and file....

The rest of the trade union leadership proposes to confine its fight against the congressional punitive legislation to the lobbying methods and dependence upon friendly capitalist politicians which have proved so costly to the unions and led them into their present blind alley.

That is why the militants must snap out of their lethargy, prod the unions into action and take the initiative to unite the labor movement for an all-out fight against the anti-labor drive.

—Socialist Workers Party Political Committee, "The Tasks of the Party in the Fight to Defend the Trade Unions" (21 January 1947)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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Wal-Mart: Labor Bureaucracy's Non-Organizing Drive

In late January, the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) informed the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) that it was disavowing any intent to unionize Wal-Mart, declaring that the union-sponsored Organization United for Respect at Walmart (OUR Walmart) merely demands that the retail giant "improve labor rights and standards for its employees." Wal-Mart had filed a complaint against the UFCW with the NLRB charging that OUR Walmart protests last fall violated federal law limiting picketing at companies where a union has not officially sought recognition. The UFCW leadership has now pledged to cease picketing for 60 days, to erase demands for unionization from union Web sites and to e-mail its disavowal to some 4,000 OUR Walmart members nationwide. In return, the NLRB issued a January 30 memorandum saying that it would hold the company's charge in abeyance for six months, waiting to see if "the Union complies with its commitments."

With their ***non-organizing*** drive at Wal-Mart, the UFCW tops hope that they can slip by both the company's anti-union machinery and the capitalist state's web of anti-labor laws. But the labor bureaucrats are deluding Wal-Mart workers with this supposedly wily strategy. It is nothing but a surrender to a capitalist exploiter known worldwide for its anti-labor chicanery. As Trotskyist leader James P. Cannon wrote about the 1934 Minneapolis strikes that helped pave the way for the Teamsters to become a powerful nationwide union: "Bluffs don't work in fundamental things, only in incidental ones. In such things as the conflict of class interests one must be prepared to fight" (*The History of American Trotskyism*, 1944).

The struggle to unionize Wal-Mart is one of those fundamental things. As the country's largest private employer, Wal-Mart has some 1.4 million workers, employing nearly one of every 100 American workers. It is one of the world's largest companies, operating more than 10,000 stores and generating $464 billion in revenue last year, roughly equal to Belgium's gross domestic product. The wealth produced by Wal-Mart's cutthroat exploitation of workers in the U.S. and abroad is enormous. The offspring of Wal-Mart founder Sam Walton, who own roughly half of the company's shares, are worth about $90 billion. That figure is equal to the combined net worth of the bottom 41.5 percent of the entire U.S. population!

On the other hand, Wal-Mart workers ("associates" in company lingo) on average earn $8.81 an hour, well below the poverty level for a family of four. Even when they manage to get "full time" work (34 hours per week), it is not uncommon for them to rely on local food pantries. New hires must beg managers to get the 30 hours per week they need to qualify for the company's costly, substandard health coverage. Wal-Mart's abuse of its workers is legendary: forced and unpaid overtime, workers locked in at night to keep them from stealing, rampant discrimination against the women who make up 70 percent of its hourly workforce.

Reuters

Southern California Black Friday protest, 23 November 2012. Labor tops have officially dropped union organizing efforts at Wal-Mart.

The astounding inequality between the obscenely rich Walton family and their impoverished employees makes Wal-Mart emblematic of the capitalist system, whose lifeblood is the exploitation of labor. What Karl Marx wrote in *Capital* (1867) during the rise of industrial capitalism is true with a vengeance today, long after the capitalist system began to decay: "Accumulation of wealth at one pole is, therefore, at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation at the opposite pole."

Much of Wal-Mart's success in accumulating profit comes from keeping unions out of its operations in the U.S. and most everywhere else. As it expanded into the rest of the U.S. from Arkansas, it brought with it the racist, anti-union "open shop" of the Southern bourgeoisie. Dishing out folksy paternalism and phony "profit-sharing" schemes with one hand, Wal-Mart management cracks the whip fast and furiously at pro-union or "uppity" workers with the other. When workers at a store in Jonquière, Quebec, voted to join the UFCW in 2004, the company simply closed the store down—one of many times it has snuffed out union organizing drives.

Organizing Wal-Mart is critical for the welfare of its army of low-wage workers and for revitalizing a labor movement that has taken one body blow after another in the last few decades. Millions of workers want and need real fighting unions. But any serious union organizing drive will mean going up against not only the capitalists whose profit margins depend on remaining union-free but also the courts, cops, labor boards and other forces of the capitalist state. Waging such battles requires a hard fight against the privileged trade-union bureaucracy and its sacred strategy of reliance on the bosses' government and the Democratic Party. Above all, what labor needs is a leadership that understands that organizing the unorganized, like all struggles against exploitation, is a matter of *class against class*.

Matthew C. Wright

Massive Wal-Mart distribution center in Temple, Texas, part of corporation's worldwide cargo chain.

Black Friday and Beyond

Right after the UFCW tops launched OUR Walmart two years ago, the *New York Times* reported, "Unlike a union, the group will not negotiate contracts on behalf of workers. But its members could benefit from federal labor laws that protect workers from retaliation for engaging in collective discussion and action" ("Wal-Mart Workers Try the Nonunion Route," 14 June 2011). OUR Walmart grew rapidly over the next year, with workers signing up on the Internet and paying the $5 monthly dues online, reflecting real desire for union organization. While union officials pinned their hopes on paper-thin legal protections, Wal-Mart bosses prepared to go after OUR Walmart as a stalking horse for future unionization. The NLRB's recent threat to clamp down on the union and OUR Walmart proves that such "protections" are a sham.

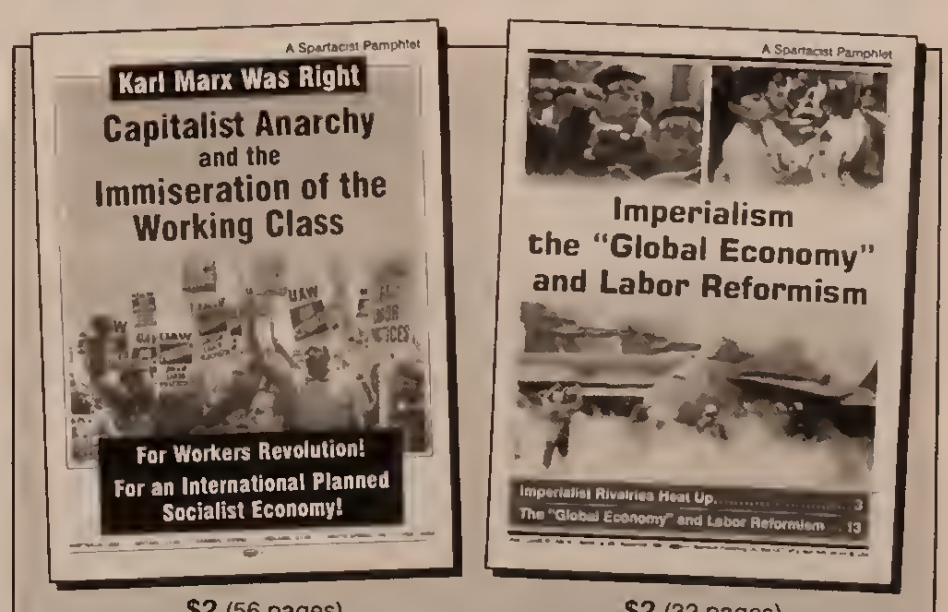
Last year's rallies culminated in the heavily publicized "Black Friday" events held in front of 1,000 Wal-Mart stores the day after Thanksgiving. Some among the 500 Wal-Mart workers who participated braved company reprisals by walking out during their work shifts. The protests were built to shame Wal-Mart for bad corporate behavior, not to shut the stores down, and union organizers explicitly avoided calling for unionization.

A slew of fake-socialist outfits hailed the protests as historic, with the International Socialist Organization going so far as to describe this non-organizing campaign as "class struggle unionism." The Party for Socialism and Liberation gushed that a work stoppage by a tiny sliver of Wal-Mart's workforce "set the stage for a dramatic upsurge in the labor movement, and is an important development in the consciousness of workers, both union and non-union" (*Liberation*, 15 October 2012). The centrist Internationalist Group described protests and small strikes held before Black Friday as having "challenged the hidebound labor movement" (*Internationalist*, November 2012). More recently, *Labor Notes* (February 2013), whose editors orbit the reformist Solidarity organization, headlined "In Walmart and Fast

continued on page 4

much of the hostility toward the Constitution's prescription of a strong national government, which came not only from supporters of Shays but from representatives of the Southern slavocracy. One of the first to suggest a Bill of Rights was Virginia planter Richard Henry Lee. With its protection of so-called states' rights, the Tenth Amendment further codified the power of the slavocracy.

While the American War of Independence released a democratic spirit that resonated internationally, it fell to the Civil War to abolish slavery and affirm the basic democratic rights of citizenship and equal protection for the entire population, black and white. Yet in clearing the road for the development of capitalism, this Second American Revolution laid the basis not only for the growth of the working class but also for the consolidation of a central bourgeois state power. With the rise of U.S. imperialism by the end of the century, a standing army was firmly established. Fearful of an armed population and striving to maintain a monopoly of violence for its state, the ruling class has over the years sought to roll back the fundamental democratic right to bear arms. ■



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Wal-Mart...

(continued from page 3)

Food, Unions Scaling Up a Strike-First Strategy."

These opportunist outfits not only give cover to the UFCW bureaucrats but also actively sow confusion about the most basic precepts of trade unionism. A strike means "one out, all out." The aim is to shut down an enterprise and its profit-making activities by mass picketing and other means. It was just such class-struggle methods that built the unions in this country and that need to be revived if labor is to get off its knees.

Before Black Friday, Wal-Mart bosses threatened employees to "show up for work or else" while also advising management hotheads to not crudely go after workers for exercising their "general legal right to engage in a walkout." There would be casualties in any real organizing drive, and unions need to be prepared to defend victimized workers. But the UFCW and OUR Walmart are not fighting for union protections. Instead they wait for labor law violations so they can file complaints with the NLRB. This only breeds illusions in the purported neutrality of the NLRB, whose purpose is to maintain labor "peace" by enforcing anti-union laws and entangling workers in protracted legal proceedings.

Supply Chain Choke Points

The hard truth is that retail workers, atomized in thousands of separate stores, do not have the social power on their own to put a wrench in Wal-Mart's profit machine. But Wal-Mart is not the invulnerable behemoth it is portrayed to be. Where it is particularly vulnerable is in its dependence on the steady movement of its wares through the "just-in-time" global cargo chain, with its key choke points. A huge proportion of Wal-Mart's commodities flows from Asian factories through West Coast ports, where they are off-loaded by longshoremen and then moved by port truckers as well as rail workers to Wal-Mart's warehouse distribution centers. A fight to organize those warehouses and Wal-Mart's army of 7,400 truck drivers, as well as the workers in its stores, would crucially depend on solidarity in action by longshoremen and other unionized workers along the cargo chain. It would also need to be linked to efforts to organize the port truckers.

Wal-Mart commonly uses subcontractors to hire and manage workers at its huge modern warehouses. Several of these have been hit by walkouts. In September, workers backed by the Change to Win-sponsored Warehouse Workers United (WWU) walked out of a Jurupa Valley, California, warehouse over unsafe work conditions. That same month, 38 non-union workers at a distribution center in Elwood, Illinois, walked off the job for three weeks to protest the firing of several co-workers as well as wage theft and unsafe work conditions.

The Elwood action was organized by the Warehouse Workers Organizing Committee (WWOC), backed by the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers (UE). While the victimized workers were rehired with back pay, in November the same subcontractor fired four more. Those firings have not been answered with walkouts, and the workers are in limbo until an NLRB hearing in May. Like the UFCW at the stores, neither WWOC nor WWU is calling for unionization of the warehouses. Nevertheless, Wal-Mart has made some concessions to warehouse workers, indicating the disproportionate leverage they hold at the distribution choke points.

WV Photo

Striking workers on picket line outside Ralphs supermarket, Los Angeles, October 2003.

By hiring layers of subcontractors, Wal-Mart seeks to insulate itself from labor strife. Militants must find a way to bring the armies of low-wage "permatemps" into the unions, including by fighting for union control of hiring as part of organizing drives. It is also necessary for labor to fight discrimination against young, old, women, black and immigrant workers, such as the thousands of Latino port truckers and warehouse workers in California.

In January, L.A. port truckers working for Toll Group won their first-ever contract after they joined the Teamsters. Their new contract raises their pay from $12.72 to $19.00 per hour and gives them access to more affordable health care, the Teamsters pension fund, paid sick leaves and holidays. This victory ought to be a springboard for renewed organizing of port truckers. Some 12,000 largely Latino port truckers are vital for the flow of goods from L.A.-area ports to the massive Inland Empire warehouse complex to the east. Unlike the Toll Group drivers, almost all of the port truckers are "owner operators." Organizing this workforce has suffered from the legalistic strategy of the Teamsters bureaucracy, which has banked on pressuring the government to reclassify them as "employees."

It's Spelled U-N-I-O-N

Having all but abandoned the strike weapon and even use of the "s-word" in the years following the crushing of the PATCO air traffic controllers union in 1981, the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy has helped oversee a steady, painful decline of the unions from their peak numbers in the 1950s. After throwing hundreds of millions of dollars into Democratic Party coffers, the AFL-CIO and Change to Win bureaucracies pined for Obama to give the go-ahead to organize through "card checks" and the Employee Free Choice Act. But the Obama White House was not about to ease the way to union organizing, and labor has gone on to suffer yet more defeats. When a wave of "right-to-work" laws swept into former bastions of union power like Wisconsin and Michigan, the union tops could not muster a single protest strike, despite the seething anger of rank-and-file unionists. Selling the notion that strike action is futile and that labor's only real weapon is electoral politics, the defeatist labor bureaucrats have a new slogan: the polling booth is the new picket line.

Nowadays, in place of union organizing, the labor officialdom conjures up workers "associations," advocacy groups, community outfits and single-issue campaigns in an attempt to get back some numbers and clout. Many of these groups exist only to help Democratic Party and other "friend of labor" capitalist politicians get elected. Some are lash-ups with clergy, small businesses, environmentalists and consumer groups pushing for good "corporate behavior" from Wal-Mart and other bloodsuckers. Instead of fighting to *unionize* Wal-Mart outlets, the leaderships of both the UFCW and SEIU service employees union have often campaigned to keep those stores out of key urban areas. In doing so, they go against the interests of the ghetto and barrio poor who would benefit from the jobs (and low prices) and could be won to union organizing drives.

In her book *Raising Expectations (And Raising Hell): My Decade Fighting for the Labor Movement*, Jane McAlevey, a former top-level SEIU service employees organizer, goes after the union's new "grassroots movements," using quotes from union dispatches:

> "In a slight change of tactics, SEIU is now...lavishly funding community groups, or simply setting up their own fully controllable 'community groups' that give an illusion of independence.... SEIU is spending tens of millions 'mobilizing underpaid, underemployed and unemployed workers' and 'channeling anger about jobs into action for positive change.' What's beyond bizarre is that the program is aimed at mobilizing poor people rather than SEIU's own base. SEIU looks everywhere except to their own membership to gin up popular revolts."

A class-struggle union leadership would seek to tap into the anger among the unemployed and the poor, not as a substitute for mobilizing workers but as a way to gather behind labor's cause those cast aside by the racist rulers. Raising such demands as free, quality health care and jobs for all with good pay and benefits, union organizing drives would find a huge reservoir of support at the base of this society.

In 2003, the trade-union tops threw away an opportunity to spearhead the organizing of Wal-Mart when they sabotaged a bitter, five-month-long strike by 60,000 UFCW grocery workers in Southern California. At the time, Wal-Mart was moving into L.A. and unionized grocers like Vons, Ralphs and Albertsons used its arrival to push the UFCW for deep concessions in health and other benefits. The strikers fought like hell to win. But in the end the strike lost because of the bureaucrats' refusal to shut down the key grocery distribution centers and to extend the strike when other supermarket contracts in California, Arizona and several other states had expired or were being negotiated.

By the mid 2000s, plenty of bureaucrats like SEIU organizer Wade Rathke had thrown in the towel when it came to Wal-Mart. Rathke's "A Wal-Mart Workers Association? An Organizing Plan" (reprinted in the 2006 book *Wal-Mart: The Face of Twenty-First-Century Capitalism*) reads like a blueprint for OUR Walmart. Concluding that unionizing Wal-Mart is impossible and that the strike weapon is "bankrupt," Rathke argues that a company union would be a step forward and that new workers "associations" could find sufficient legal protection in New Deal-era labor legislation.

Similar arguments for "non-majority," "minority" and "open source" organizing are now sprouting up throughout the American labor movement, rejecting key lessons from the 1930s fight to forge industrial unions. What low-wage workers at Wal-Mart and everywhere need are strong, fighting unions and the power and benefits only unions can secure: good wages, seniority rights, work rules, safety protections, health care, pensions, vacations, etc. They need solid contracts and the readiness to strike to defend their gains.

To organize Wal-Mart, whose tentacles reach around the world, would require a high level of coordinated labor action, nationally and internationally. U.S. workers must form bonds of mutual assistance with their class brothers and sisters in Mexico, where Wal-Mart outraged the populace when it bribed officials to enable the company to build a "supercenter" next to the ancient pyramids in Teotihuacán. In Bangladesh, after a fire at a Wal-Mart subcontractor killed 112 garment workers in November, labor organizers produced documents showing that the retailer resisted safety improvements at the notoriously fire-prone factories. That kind of industrial murder should ignite internationally backed organizing drives demanding real gains in safety. But any such solidarity is undermined by the chauvinist flag-waving of the U.S. union tops, whose protectionist calls to "save American jobs" come at the expense of workers elsewhere.

Unionizing Wal-Mart would go a long way toward reversing what has been a one-sided class war against the working class. Led by a revolutionary workers party, a revived American proletariat would fight not only to regain what it has lost in recent decades but to expropriate the tiny class of capitalist exploiters, from Sam Walton's spawn to the owners of the banks and major industries. That will take sweeping away the capitalist state and erecting in its place a workers state as part of the fight for world socialist revolution. ■

Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

BAY AREA

Wednesday, April 17, 7:30 p.m.

The Russian Revolution of 1917: How the Working Class Took Power

San Francisco State University
Cesar Chavez Student Center
Delmy Rodriguez Conference Room
(T-152, Terrace Level)

Information and readings: (510) 839-0851
sycbayarea@sbcglobal.net

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Wednesday, April 10, 7 p.m.

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University of Chicago, Reynolds Club
5706 South University

Information and readings: (312) 563-0441
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LOS ANGELES

Tuesday, April 9, 6:30 p.m.

Lessons of the Russian Revolution—For New Octobers!

UCLA, Ackerman Union
Room 3516

Information and readings: (213) 380-8239
slsycla@sbcglobal.net

NEW YORK CITY

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—— Part Two ——
From the Kornilov Coup to the October Revolution

CCNY, NAC Room 1/211
138th St. and Amsterdam Ave.

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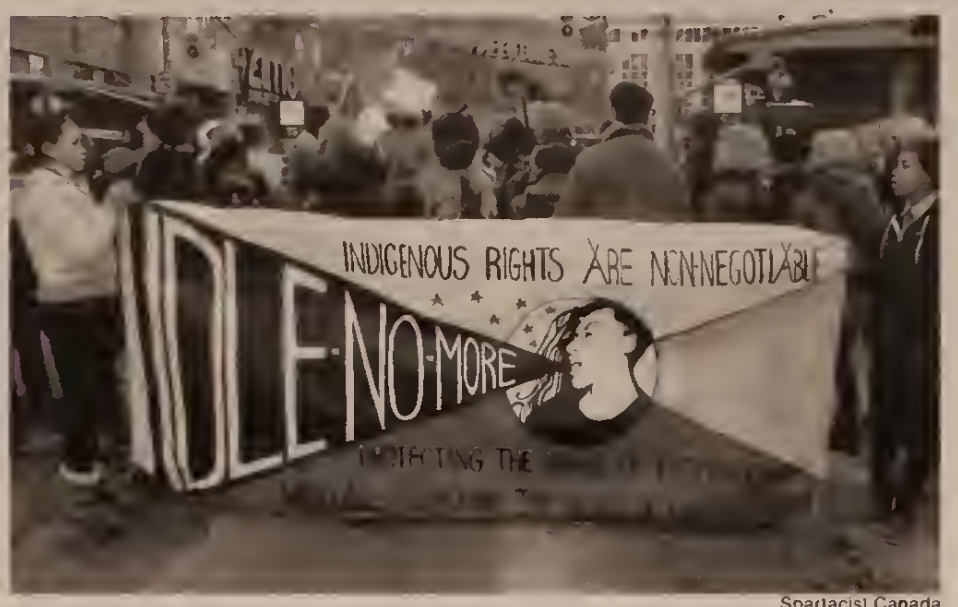
Canada: Racist Hell for Native Peoples

The following article is reprinted from Spartacist Canada *No. 176 (Spring 2013), newspaper of the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste, Canadian section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist). Recent demonstrations erupting in defense of Native rights have rallied under the banner Idle No More.*

The Idle No More protests have put a harsh spotlight on the desperate conditions of Native people. Beginning late last year as a teach-in organized by four Saskatchewan women in opposition to changes to the Indian Act [adopted in the 19th century] and several federal government bills, the protests spread like wildfire. Thousands of people in cities, towns and reserves across the country mobilized on December 10 to demand recognition of Native rights. The next day, Chief Theresa Spence of the Attawapiskat band in Northern Ontario began a hunger strike. In the weeks that followed, rallies, teach-ins and flash mobs popped up in cities from coast to coast, along with road and rail blockades.



Spartacist Canada

Native rights protest in Toronto, January 1. New laws further undermine aboriginal rights.

SPARTACIST CANADA

The protests have been fueled by the misery and racist brutality that blight the lives of the vast majority of Native people. Whether on the desolate reserves or at the margins of the cities, everywhere the aboriginal population is plagued by unemployment, poverty, illness and homelessness. Supplementing and enforcing this is a remorseless diet of racist police violence. While making up less than 3 percent of the population, Native people comprise a staggering 35 percent of the women and 23 percent of the men in prison. Almost half of Native adults are unemployed and over half have less than a high school education. On the reserves established to formalize their dispossession, median family income is barely $11,000.

The backdrop to the spate of new federal laws further eroding aboriginal rights is the government's push to accelerate resource extraction in areas where Native people are the predominant population and/or have longstanding land claims. Some $650 billion worth of resource projects are at stake over the next ten years. This notably includes the Northern Gateway pipeline, which is opposed by most Native groups. Some of the new laws that sparked the protests weaken or eliminate environmental protections. Changes to the Indian Act allow for the surrender of reserve land without proper consent of all those affected. Such measures will directly benefit the resource companies, who long to get their hands on the mineral wealth from which they hope to reap fabulous profits. And it's all being done without any pretense of consultation, much less the consent of the Native population.

The Idle No More banner was also taken up by the annual February marches in remembrance of the aboriginal women who have been murdered or gone missing since the 1990s, particularly in B.C. [British Columbia]. According to the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC), the number dead or missing now approaches 600. The NDP [social-democratic New Democratic Party] has joined NWAC, Amnesty International and other groups in calling for a "national inquiry." The ruling class cares nothing for the lives and deaths of Native women. When they accede to calls for public inquiries, their purpose is to channel anger into whitewashes that ultimately strengthen the capitalist state by refurbishing its tarnished image. It is precisely the state—the prisons, courts and cops—that is the main source of the repression of Native people.

A new Human Rights Watch report entitled "Those Who Take Us Away" drives this home in wrenching detail. Dozens of aboriginal women and girls from ten northern B.C. towns have faced violent abuse by police, with at least one report of rape. The brutality includes young girls being pepper-sprayed and shocked with tasers; a 12-year-old girl attacked by a police dog; a 17-year-old girl repeatedly punched by an officer in the back of a police car; women strip-searched by male officers; and women injured by excessive force during their arrests. The researchers were "struck by the level of fear on the part of women we met to talk about sexual abuse inflicted by police officers."

Capitalism and Native Oppression

The legacy of colonialism, first French and later British, besets Native peoples today. Through a combination of fraud, military conquest and the devastating impact of disease following European contact, the pre-existing aboriginal societies were destroyed and the foundations of Canadian capitalism laid. Over much of the last century, a state policy of forced assimilation led to the abduction of Native children from their parents and their internment in church-run residential schools. The aim was to destroy the aboriginal languages and culture. The architect of the residential school system, Duncan Campbell Scott, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, laid this bare in 1920:

> "I want to get rid of the Indian problem. I do not think as a matter of fact, that this country ought to continuously protect a class of people who are able to stand alone.... Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Oepartment...."
>
> —quoted in E. Brian Titley, *A Narrow Vision: Duncan Campbell Scott and the Administration of Indian Affairs in Canada* (1986)

The capitalist rulers failed to wipe out the indigenous peoples, but a wall of racism and systematic deprivation keeps the Native population in a state of wretchedness. Every year, exposés of the life-threatening conditions on one reserve or another spark anger and media attention—to utterly no effect. In late 2011, it was the turn of subarctic Attawapiskat. Theresa Spence and other Native leaders declared a state of emergency to draw attention to the desperate housing crisis there. Dozens of families were living in uninsulated tents and shacks without running water or plumbing, some using buckets as toilets and emptying them into nearby ditches. Another 128 families were living in homes condemned because of black mould and "infrastructure failures," meaning that they were uninhabitable. The Conservative government responded by blaming the band. Then they appointed a third-party manager against the band's wishes and ordered an audit.

The Harper Tories [Conservative Party of Prime Minister Stephen Harper] have shown the same disdain for the recent protests. One could not read a daily newspaper without seeing Spence vilified and portrayed as financially corrupt (courtesy of the feds' audit). Obscenely, she was baited as a terrorist by the *National Post* (27 December 2012) and denounced a day later by the *Globe and Mail* for using "coercion," i.e., a hunger strike. Spence's hunger strike and the Idle No More protests became lightning rods for racist filth in the gutter press and on the internet, sparking protests at Sun News media offices in Calgary, Toronto and Winnipeg. As *Toronto Star* columnist Heather Mallick put it, "it turns out that writing a column about Idle No More and the ongoing battle by Indians in Canada for fair treatment attracts racists the way a wet lawn calls out to worms."

Reflecting an increasingly young Native population with few prospects, the Idle No More protests were striking in their youthful makeup. The protests were also fueled by growing discontent on the part of younger Native people with the ineffectual Assembly of First Nations (AFN) leadership and its cozy relationship with the federal government. This was symbolized by the outcry against AFN national chief Shawn Atleo when he met with Harper in January despite a boycott by many other Native leaders.

AFN leaders have also developed close relations with the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] and the Ontario and Quebec police. The *Toronto Star* (15 February) outlined how in 2007 AFN leaders colluded with the cops to undermine one of the largest Native protests in Canadian history, the June 29 national day of action. This included "a joint media relations strategy" and a cop placed in the AFN's Ottawa office. Julian Fantino—then head of the Ontario police and today a Tory cabinet minister—threatened Mohawk activist Shawn Brant with "grave consequences" if he did not call off a blockade. As the *Star* noted, the AFN's collaboration with the police "coincided with the start of a sweeping federal program of surveillance of aboriginal communities and individuals engaged in land rights activism that continues today."

We Need a Revolutionary Workers Party!

The oppression of the Native population gives the true measure of this racist society. In the course of Spence's hunger strike, Liberal and NDP politicians made their way to her camp for tear-jerking photo-ops. This should fool no one. The Liberal Party ran Canada for the better part of a century, overseeing untold state brutality and the systematic theft of both lands and peoples. As for the New Democrats, their record is plain. In B.C. in 1995, the NDP government organized what was then the largest RCMP/military operation in Canadian history to evict a handful of Native activists from a ranch at Gustafsen Lake. The RCMP and military created a war zone, and a bloodbath was averted only because the Native occupiers left the area.

Native people need access to jobs at union wages and massive education, health and housing programs, including the provision of clean water and electricity. This is not rocket science, but the bourgeoisie will never provide such necessities. Not far from Attawapiskat, where unemployment is 70 percent, a De Beers diamond

continued on page 11

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For over a century, aboriginal children were torn from their families and interned in residential schools like this one in Canada's Northwest Territories.

150 Years Since the Emancipation Proclamation

Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper

Library of Congress

Top: May 1863 Civil War battle at Port Hudson, Louisiana, one of first in which black Union troops fought. Inset: President Lincoln presents Emancipation Proclamation to his cabinet.

Spartacist Forum

PART ONE

Finish the Civil War!

The following is a presentation, edited for publication, by Spartacist League speaker Brian Manning at a March 23 New York City forum.

The Commander-in-Chief of bloody U.S. imperialism was inaugurated again a couple of months ago, and he cynically repeated the words of Abraham Lincoln and the Declaration of Independence—fine words about fighting for justice and equality. But Barack Obama is Commander-in-Chief of a capitalist system long into its imperialist epoch of decay. Today, racist U.S. imperialism continues to carry out what has been more than a century of pillage and war across the globe, brutally exploiting labor at home and abroad while qualitatively arresting wider social and economic development. The American capitalist rulers are the main enemy of the world's working people and oppressed, as the millions of dead bodies from Hiroshima to Korea to Vietnam to Iraq to Afghanistan silently attest.

In 1852 Frederick Douglass said, "There is not a nation on the earth guilty of practices more shocking and bloody than are the people of the United States at this very hour." Substitute "ruling class" for "people" and it holds true today. But in the interim there was a great revolution in this country—the Second American Revolution. The Civil War was the last great, progressive act of the American bourgeoisie. To further the consolidation of industrial capitalism, at a time when the exploitation of free labor represented an historical advance, the North was compelled to destroy the system of chattel slavery in the South. Slavery has been smashed, but the legacy of slavery, racial oppression, lives on.

The foundations of Obama's current residence and indeed the foundations of capitalist America were built by the labor of black slaves. The election of the first black president in history has done nothing and will do nothing to relieve the continuing nightmare of racial oppression for the mass of the black population. That oppression is structurally embedded in American capitalism and will not be overcome short of socialist revolution.

Obama's liberal apologists, including those on the left who consider themselves socialists, like the International Socialist Organization (ISO) and Socialist Alternative, make excuses for Obama. They complain that Obama's hands are tied, that he can't do anything because if he does the right wing will say he was doing it for black people. Well, Obama's hands aren't tied! The hands of the working class are tied, chained to the racist capitalist Democratic Party by trade-union misleaders who preach that the Democrats are the lesser evil. Obama likes to appeal for unity—one nation, one people. But this is a class-divided country—the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. And the two classes have no common interests. In this capitalist country, the head of the government always represents the ruling class. Obama represents the system that is based on exploitation, oppression and war. The cynical sops he throws out are so much poisonous pabulum to fool the gullible or satisfy the sycophants.

With the release of the *Lincoln* movie, it was inevitable that there would be favorable comparisons of Lincoln and Obama. But we are talking apples and oranges. Abraham Lincoln was president in a different epoch, when capitalism was historically progressive, when for a short time the interests of the nascent bourgeoisie coincided with the interests of black people in their fight against slavery and racist oppression, when the triumph of capitalism despite all the horrors inherent in that system of exploitation meant, as Abraham Lincoln put it, "a new birth of freedom." Obama does not represent the culmination of the fight for black freedom but the effort of a retrograde system to preserve its barbaric rule by placing a black man at the helm.

One hundred and fifty years ago, when Lincoln was president, the capitalist system was different—not prettier, not benign, but compelled by history to eliminate a more backward economic system. The Union armies, black and white, began the task of ending black oppression by burning out the system of slavery. But the task of achieving full equality for black people still remains. The special oppression born of slavery will be destroyed only through a class-struggle fight against that oppression and the system that perpetuates it—capitalism. We fight for the full integration of black people into an egalitarian socialist society—revolutionary integration. It is up to the multiracial working class, led by its most conscious elements forged together in a revolutionary vanguard party, to finish the job. That's why we say: Finish the Civil War!

The Civil War: A Social Revolution

An antiquated social order does not cede its place to a new order without resistance—not today, not ever. A change in social regimes presupposes the harshest form of class struggle, i.e., revolution. The American Civil War was the most titanic and bloody of all social struggles during the 19th century. That struggle and the changes it wrought in the social and economic system, particularly in regard to the black population, set the stage for the American socialist revolution today. It was of decisive significance because the first American Revolution, in 1776, didn't accomplish all of the tasks demanded of the bourgeoisie, specifically, national unification under a common political economy. It did not answer the question of who was to have political and economic supremacy: the slavocracy or the bourgeoisie. The first American Revolution was born of a compromise that gave the slavocracy an inordinate amount of power.

Compromise, that's what the American system is all about, that's how change comes about, right? The president of Emory University in Atlanta recently lauded the compromise that left black people enslaved and counted as three-fifths of a human being. But I bet the slave, shackled and whipped in perpetuity, didn't think it was much of a compromise.

Despite pervasive racist attitudes among all social classes in the North, the compelling historic interests of Northern capital, expressed in the founding of the Republican Party as explicitly anti-slavery, led to a war against the southern slavocracy. The Radical program eventually became government policies. The armies of the Confederacy were defeated on the battlefields of the Civil War, and the political and economic power of the slaveowners' oligarchy was shattered. The bourgeois dictatorship set up during the war was consolidated and the republic remodeled into conformity with the class aims and interests of the bourgeoisie. The way was paved for the exploitation of the North American continent and the world by American capital.

The North's victory was possible only through the emancipation of the millions of black chattel slaves and the arming of 200,000 of them in a war that destroyed the slave system. Today, the descendants of those slaves form a key component of the American proletariat, which will be the gravedigger of capitalism. The joint struggle of blacks and whites together has been a key motor force for social progress in this country, from the liberal-led civil rights movement that resulted in the end of *de jure* segregation to the massive class battles—many led by reds—that led to the formation of the integrated CIO unions.

In the 19th century, the Civil War and Reconstruction constituted the most far-

reaching example of that joint struggle. The turbulent decade following the Civil War was one of interracial bourgeois democracy in the South, carried out by the freedmen and their white allies and protected by federal troops, many of them black. This period, known as Radical Reconstruction, was the most egalitarian experiment in U.S. history. A hundred and fifty years after the fact, the bourgeoisie wants to bury the truth about the Civil War. They would like to blot out any record of the fact that a social revolution occurred, that armies of black former slaves bloodily suppressed white racist armies. The bourgeoisie wants to paint an image of the war as a tragic conflict, a purely military affair, and to extol the virtues of Lincoln the gifted and wily compromiser, the kindly Father Ahraham who freed the slaves.

Because of the reality of black oppression today, people generally don't appreciate the significance of the Emancipation Proclamation. Black people today are no longer slaves, but neither are they free. The war and its results were a good thing. It was a social revolution in so far as labor is concerned. Slavery was destroyed. It is just unfortunate that it did not come sooner and that its job was not done more thoroughly.

The Northern bourgeoisie was reluctant to wage revolutionary warfare against the slavocracy, and afterward they made their peace with the Southern propertied classes and their minions at the expense of the emancipated blacks. The period after the destruction of the slave system was a period characterized by great fluidity in social relations, as the old social order had been destroyed. But the defeat of Reconstruction ensured the subordinate position of black people in American society. Black people were eventually consolidated into a race-color caste, integrated into the capitalist economy but forcibly segregated at the bottom of society. This was codified around the turn of the last century in the system known as Jim Crow.

The contours of society that emerged out of the Civil War and the defeat of Reconstruction—the economic system, the social relations, the political structure—are essentially the contours of American society that we know today. That's not to say there haven't been some changes since then, for example, those resulting from the civil rights movement. But the basic lines are still the same.

The young working class did not enter the struggle against the slave power as a class on its own account, or with as much consciousness of its own aims as had heen the case in the bourgeois revolutions in Europe in the 19th century. In the North, the white working class was the base of the slaveholders' Democratic Party. You know, it's nice to be able to denounce the Democrats here and not have people argue, "Oh, they're the lesser of two evils." Political parties cannot ignore their heritage. The Democrats were the party of slavery, the party of the White Leagues and the Redeemers, the party of the Dixiecrats. And now they're the party of Obama.

It was only when the Northern bourgeoisie conquered political power and remodeled the state according to its own wants that the inevitable conflict between labor and capital became imminent. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in Europe fought from the very beginning for the victory of the Union, the Northern bourgeoisie, in the Civil War. This was not because they were interested in a better, more just bourgeois society per se but because they wanted the working class to fight for socialist revolution, to seize power in its own name. They knew that it could not do so as long as slavery dominated and disfigured the country, stunting the development and consciousness of the proletariat. As Marx wrote, "Labour cannot emancipate itself in the white skin, where in the black skin it is branded."

And the War Came

In 1860 the slaveowners said that the slave system was great. It had been in place on this continent for 250 years. But in 1865, four million black slaves had been freed in the course of a great Civil War. A key milestone was the Emancipation Proclamation, which was the death knell of slavery on the North American continent.

In this talk I want to focus in a little more detail on the summer and fall of 1862, on the various challenges that Abraham Lincoln had to confront when making his decision for emancipation. That's when the character of the war changed. Before the battle of Antietam in Maryland in September 1862 and the announcement of the Emancipation Proclamation in the wake of that Union victory, it was possihle that a compromise settlement that left slavery intact could have been hammered out. Afterward, only a hard war was possihle—a war of subjugation in which the slavocracy and its ability to wage war against the Union were destroyed.

As Marxists and historical materialists, we see the world in class terms. In 1860, the South had to expand or die. The question was who was going to be master of the North American continent. Marx wrote:

> "The present struggle between the South and North is, therefore, nothing but a struggle between two social systems, the system of slavery and the system of free labour. The struggle has broken out because the two systems can no longer live peacefully side hy side on the North American continent. It can only be ended by the victory of one system or the other."
>
> —"The Civil War in the United States," Novemher 1861

The slave system was increasingly a brake on material progress. By all indices—industrial production, miles of railroad, agricultural production—the South lagged way behind the North. Just as European capitalism had to liberate itself from the outworn restrictions of feudalism, so a dynamic American capitalism could no longer coexist with the outworn institution of slavery. Abraham Lincoln was elected on a program of no expansion of slavery. He could not have been elected on an abolition program. But even so, his program was not acceptable to the South.

Lincoln wanted to put slavery on a road to eventual extinction, and his favorite schemes were for gradual compensated emancipation and the colonization of black people outside of the country. The slavocracy, that thin layer of wealthy planters that ruled the South and the federal government for most of its existence up till then, still would have none of that. Lincoln was also inclined to denounce slavery as denying men and women the hard-earned fruits of their labor. He thought it was immoral for some to eat while others did all of the work. Lincoln and the Republicans extolled the virtues of the free labor system wherehy everyone supposedly has a chance to improve their condition.

Timothy O'Sullivan

Escaped slaves at Union Army lines in Virginia, 1862.

Now, there hasn't been much acknowledgement of the Emancipation Proclamation sesquicentennial. But the *Wall Street Journal* did notice, and what they focused on was that Lincoln believed in liberty of all kinds, beginning with economic freedom. That's rich coming from the newspaper that speaks for the lords of finance capital, some of the most despicable parasites, who believe it's their right to suck the lifeblood out of the poor and oppressed masses around the world.

The Democrats had dominated the political scene since the time of Andrew Jackson. But in 1860 the party split between a Northern and a Southern wing. Many in the Northern wing opposed secession, and so the Democrats lost to the Republicans. With Lincoln's election, eleven states seceded and rose in armed rebellion, attacking federal forces at Fort Sumter. Lincoln never compromised on the need to save the Union despite pressure to do so. But initially his war aims were limited to restoring the Union and bringing the Confederate states back into the Union as it had been. Lincoln wanted to draw in to that fight all the elements that wanted to save the Union. Hence, his conciliatory policies toward the border states and the War Democrats. He could not have mohilized for the war without the help of the War Democrats.

The Southern war aims were very explicit: to protect and defend slavery. The Confederate vice president, Alexander Stephens, in a speech right after secession—the famous "cornerstone speech"—said that his new government's "foundations are laid, its cornerstone rests, upon the great truth that the negro is not the equal to the white man; that slavery, subordination to the superior race, is his natural and moral condition." So even if the North was not fighting *against* slavery, the South was fighting *for* slavery.

Butler and the "Contrabands"

From the beginning, the abolitionists raised the call to turn the war into an abolition war. For years, through tireless and courageous agitation, the abolitionists had sought to bring the slavery question to the fore. There had been the prelude to the Civil War in "Bleeding Kansas," and John Brown and his integrated band had sent a lightning bolt through the nation with the Harpers Ferry raid in 1859. Now the chance to wage war against the slave power was here. The great black abolitionist Frederick Douglass wrote:

> "Fire must be met with water, darkness with light, and war for the destruction of liberty must he met with war for the destruction of slavery.... ***Let the slaves and free colored people be called into service, and formed into a liberating army***, to march into the South and raise the hanner of Emancipation among the slaves."
>
> —"How to End the War," *Douglass' Monthly* (May 1861), printed in *Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass*, Vol. 3

The slaves knew the stakes. They had their own agenda and immediately started coming into Union lines. Union commanders were wondering: "What do we do with these slaves coming into our lines?" The slaves had been doing work for the Confederates, raising food, of course, and working for the army as teamsters and laborers. The Northern government had no consistent policy as to what to do about slaves and the slavery question, as yet. So, in May 1861, General George McClellan, who was a pro-slavery War Democrat in Virginia, told his armies to send the slaves back to their owners and be prepared to suppress slave insurrections.

On the other hand, Benjamin Butler—a political appointee and a lawyer from Massachusetts—was also a Democrat, but one who actually started changing when confronted with the problems of war. Butler came up with a new policy, the contrahand policy. Also in Virginia in May 1861, three slaves who had been building Confederate fortifications came into Union lines. The next day, a Confederate colonel who had been their owner came in under a flag of truce and demanded his property back under the authority of the Fugitive Slave Law. Well, Butler told him no, they're contraband of war and we're keeping them. And he sent the colonel packing. That policy was eventually endorsed by the federal government.

So the slaves came into Union lines

continued on page 8

White House

Reuters

Barack Obama, chief executive of racist U.S. capitalism, gesturing toward copy of Emancipation Proclamation in Oval Office, January 2010. Below: NYPD attack on protesters at March 13 Brooklyn vigil for Kimani Gray, black teenager killed by cops.

150 Years...

(continued from page 7)

by the thousands, saying, "We're contrabands!" and the pressure to abolish slavery started rising. But Lincoln was not ready to act on the slavery question. In August 1861, General Frémont, who had been the 1856 candidate of the Republican Party, issued an order in Missouri freeing the slaves of rebels. His armies weren't faring too well and he needed some help. He was dealing with what would become a really brutal guerrilla war in Missouri. He issued an order which stated:

> "All persons who shall be taken with arms in their hands within these lines shall be tried by court martial, and, if found guilty will be shot. The property, real and personal, of all persons in the State of Missouri, who shall take up arms against the United States...is declared to be confiscated to the public use, and their slaves, if any they have, are hereby declared free men."
>
> —quoted in William Wells Brown. *The Negro in the American Rebellion* (1971)

Lincoln forced Frémont to revoke that order, and in December 1861 he fired his Secretary of War, Simon Cameron, who had been advocating emancipation. Granted, Cameron was truly corrupt and

Mathew Brady

Edwin Stanton, Lincoln's Secretary of War.

ineffective. Nevertheless, he was advocating emancipation. Lincoln ended up replacing Cameron with War Democrat Edwin Stanton, who turned out to be a great choice.

Not a whole lot was happening on the battle front. There were a few victories for the Union, notably by Ulysses S. Grant west of the Appalachians. Meanwhile, McClellan was training the Army of the Potomac in Virginia. Lincoln was pressuring him to act, but he just stayed with his huge army, camped around Washington, D.C., doing nothing but drilling.

Toward Emancipation

In the spring of 1862, neither side was closer to victory. Lincoln continued efforts at gradual, compensated emancipation. He begged the border states to embrace compensation, hinting to them that bigger changes might be coming down the pike if they did not embrace compensated emancipation. Lincoln also signed into law all measures passed by Congress proscribing slavery, including the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia and the federal territories.

For many soldiers, the experience of war was turning them against slavery. A volunteer from the Third Wisconsin Regiment wrote, "The rebellion is abolitionizing the whole army." In May 1862, General David Hunter, commanding the Department of the South, comprising South Carolina, Georgia and Florida, declared that slaves in his Department were forever free. Lincoln overturned that order, much to the chagrin of abolitionists, and said that if anyone were to act, it would be the president, not his generals. But Lincoln did not object to emancipation per se.

Hunter was operating from the Sea Islands, just off the coast of South Carolina and Georgia. The slave masters had fled at the beginning of the war, when the Union Navy arrived. Hunter had been requesting reinforcements so he could carry on some work on the mainland but had not been able to get any from Washington. So he started arming the slaves on his own. The War Department got wind of this and wanted to know what Hunter was doing. He replied in a letter:

> "No regiment of 'fugitive slaves' has been or is being organized in this department. There is, however, a fine regiment of persons whose late masters are 'fugitive rebels'.... They are now, working one and all, with remarkable industry to place themselves in a position to go in full and effective pursuit of their fugacious and traitorous proprietors."
>
> —quoted in Dudley Cornish, *The Sable Arm* (1990)

Many of those first organized by Hunter later went on to be incorporated into the Union Army as the First and Second South Carolina Colored Troops.

Any momentum created by the Union victories at Fort Donelson and Shiloh was offset by the stalled Peninsula Campaign in Virginia in the spring and early summer of 1862, which culminated in a series of savage engagements known collectively as the Seven Days' Battles, fought between June 25 and July 1. George McClellan, leading the main Northern army, the Army of the Potomac, had been delaying, dilly-dallying all winter. Then, when forced into battle, he was overcautious, tentative and anxious to blame anyone—particularly Lincoln—for his own failures. He got to within a few miles of Richmond and then retreated. Two years later, Lincoln confided to artist Francis Carpenter that "I felt that we had reached the end of our rope on the plan of operations we had been pursuing; that we had about played our last card, and must change our tactics, or lose the game."

In mid June, Lincoln apparently first decided to issue an emancipation order, and he discussed this with his vice president, Hannibal Hamlin. Six months earlier, in December 1861, Lincoln said in his message to Congress: "The war continues. In considering the policy to be adopted for suppressing the insurrection I have been anxious and careful that the inevitable conflict for this purpose shall not degenerate into a violent and remorseless revolutionary struggle." But increasingly, the war was becoming exactly that on the slavery question and on the question of the destruction of the South's ability to make war. To bring this to fruition, Lincoln had to dance through a minefield: Pro-slavery generals who didn't want to fight to finish off the rebels, border state opposition to tampering with slavery, public opinion in the North, which was hardly universally abolitionist.

McClellan in the Way

On July 8, Lincoln's most powerful general, McClellan, gave him a letter. Really it was a political manifesto urging a conservative war policy and urging Lincoln to abjure all thoughts of emancipation and put control of all military affairs into McClellan's hands. McClellan was a real piece of work. He had been placed in command the previous fall and had effectively reorganized and trained the army. He was totally full of himself, disdainful of Lincoln and angling for power. He surrounded himself with cronies all with the same view: keep things as they are, don't touch slavery.

But Congress and Lincoln had other ideas. On July 17, Congress passed the Second Confiscation Act, which allowed the seizure of rebel property, including slaves who would be emancipated. Although he signed it, Lincoln had his doubts, still. He actually wrote out a veto message that said, "The severest justice may not always be the best policy." Lincoln was not a consistent proponent of hard war, yet. At the same time, he wrote a letter to a Treasury official in New Orleans who complained that Union policy seemed headed toward emancipation. Lincoln wrote testily: "What would you do in my position? Would you drop the war where it is? Or would you prosecute it in future with elderstalk squirts charged with rosewater?"

Alexander Gardner

Lincoln confronts General McClellan at site of 1862 Battle of Antietam.

On July 22, Lincoln presented a draft of the Emancipation Proclamation to his cabinet. Secretary of State William Seward suggested that Lincoln hold off issuing this preliminary proclamation until there was a Union victory. Otherwise, it might be viewed as an act of desperation on the part of the Union.

Lincoln acceded to this, but that victory did not come for another two months. You know, Lincoln was such a bundle of contradictions. As we wrote in our pamphlet *Black History and the Class Struggle* (No. 22): "The American Civil War was a bourgeois revolution, and Lincoln was both bourgeois and revolutionary at the same time. With all the contradictions this implies." Here's a good example. Lincoln had already determined that he was going to emancipate the slaves in August 1862, and so he met with black leaders that month at the White House to encourage them to embrace colonization. He argued that blacks should leave the country because "you and we are different races. Even when you cease to be slaves, you are yet far removed from being placed on an equality with the white race. But for your race among us, there could not be war. It is better for us both to be separated."

The black delegation was not impressed, and told him so. Black slaves had built the South, had supported themselves and their masters and created untold wealth for their masters besides. And the war had raised the hopes of the black population. What little sentiment there had been for emigration before the war totally dissipated after the war began.

Then on August 17 Horace Greeley wrote in his *New York Tribune* "The Prayer of Twenty Millions Demanding Emancipation." Lincoln wrote his famous response:

> "My paramount object in this struggle *is* to save the Union, and is *not* either to save or destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing *any* slave, I would do it. And if I could save it by freeing *all* the slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that....
>
> "I have here stated my purpose according to my view of *official* duty; and I intend no modification of my oft-expressed *personal* wish that all men everywhere could be free."

Lincoln was still worried about the border states. How would whites there react to an emancipation edict? Cassius Clay, a Kentucky radical Unionist after whom Muhammad Ali would later be named, told Lincoln to chill out: Anybody who's in a border state who wanted to fight for the Confederacy is already fighting for the Confederacy. Meanwhile, McClellan is sitting idly with his army. He said he was gratified to receive "letters from the North urging me to march on Washington and assume the government."

On August 30 there was another Union disaster: General Pope was defeated at the Second Battle of Bull Run. McClellan looked on gleefully as Pope's forces around D.C. were routed, holding his own forces back from coming to their relief. He figured if Pope was defeated it could only further his own agenda. Pope had lost the confidence of his officers and the army. So Lincoln appointed McClellan to command all of the armies around D.C., over the strenuous objections of his cabinet. Secretary of War Stanton had passed around a statement calling for McClellan's removal, which almost all of the cabinet signed. Treasury Secretary Salmon Chase said that McClellan should be taken out and shot. But Lincoln didn't see an alternative. He kept McClellan as the top general, but he was a total wreck about it.

McClellan Removed

The summer of 1862 was the key turning point in the war. The strategies of both the North and the South had to change if *either* was to win a victory. At the end of August, the South launched a simultaneous invasion of two border states, Maryland and Kentucky, to "liberate" the supposedly pro-Confederate population from Yankee oppression. Lincoln and Confederate president Jeff Davis were not acting as

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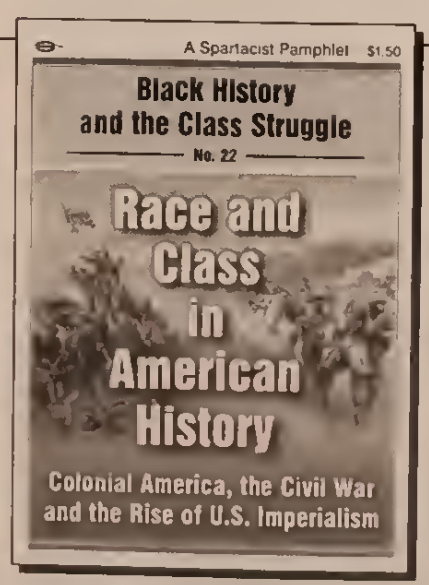

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Mumia Abu-Jamal Attorneys Challenge Resentencing Process

On February 25, attorneys for class-war prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal filed an appeal challenging the secretive court order that sentenced him to life without parole last August. The sentence was mandated by Pennsylvania statute following Mumia's removal from death row in December 2011, after the Philadelphia district attorney's office ended its campaign to legally lynch him (see "Drive to Execute Mumia Halted," *WV* No. 993, 6 January 2012). Mumia's legal papers note that while the outcome of a hearing may have been preordained, the deprivation of his basic due process rights jeopardizes future legal efforts to fight for his freedom.

Seeking a new sentencing hearing, the brief details how the court violated both Pennsylvania law and due process rights by imposing sentence without notice to Mumia or his counsel, preventing Mumia from being present and offering information and argument. The brief further notes, "In fact, there is no record that the sentencing took place in open court at all."

The secret resentencing of Mumia had more in common with the conclave of the College of Cardinals to anoint the new pope than the due process that purports to be the underpinning of American "justice." Barring Mumia recalled his eviction from most of the 1982 trial in which he was sentenced to death by a judge who was overheard promising, "I'm going to help them fry the n----r." Once again the courts have demonstrated that from the day he was falsely charged with the killing of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner, this lifelong fighter for black freedom has no rights the capitalist rulers are bound to respect.

Mumia was targeted by the racist cops from the age of 15, when he donned the beret of the Black Panther Party. The murderous fury of the police was reinforced when he became a renowned journalist known as the "voice of the voiceless" and, in the late 1970s, a supporter of the demonized and brutalized Philadelphia MOVE commune. Mumia's innocence of Faulkner's murder is a fact as demonstrable as the earth is round. But court after court has refused to even consider the mass of evidence proving this.

CSDN

Mumia, July 2012.

Mumia's conviction was based on lying testimony extorted by the cops, a "confession" manufactured by the police and prosecutors and phony ballistics "evidence." In 2001, Mumia's attorneys presented in state and federal courts the sworn confession of Arnold Beverly that he and another man were hired for the job because Faulkner "was a problem for the mob and corrupt policemen because he interfered with the graft and payoffs made to allow illegal activity," such as prostitution, gambling and drugs (see the September 2001 Partisan Defense Committee pamphlet, *Mumia Abu-Jamal Is an Innocent Man!*). At the time, the Philadelphia police were under three corruption investigations by the Feds, encompassing virtually the entire chain of command that oversaw the "investigation" of Faulkner's death.

Mumia may no longer live in the shadow of the executioner, instead condemned to what he describes as the "'slow' Death Row" of life in prison. From the 1887 execution of four anarchist labor organizers known as the Haymarket martyrs, the gallows and dungeons are the capitalist rulers' reward for fighters for the exploited and oppressed. Today such prisoners include American Indian Movement leader Leonard Peltier, eight MOVE members and Jaan Laaman and Thomas Manning of the Ohio 7. The PDC, a class-struggle legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League, urges union militants, black activists and radical youth to take up the cause of freedom for Mumia and all the class-war prisoners.

* * *

Contributions for Mumia's legal defense can be made out to the National Lawyers Guild Foundation, earmarked for "Mumia," and mailed to: Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, 132 Nassau Street, Room 922, New York, NY 10038. To correspond with Mumia, write to: Mumia Abu-Jamal, AM 8335 SCI Mahanoy, 301 Morea Road, Frackville, PA 17932. ■

A Death Sentence for Defending Her Client?

Lynne Stewart

By Mumia Abu-Jamal

The following was transcribed from a February 21 prisonradio.org recording.

Lynne Stewart, a brilliant, gung-ho trial attorney, has a stellar history that many attorneys would kill for: a defense attorney who truly fights for her clients and, far more often than not, brings them home. She has battled some of the biggest cases in New York history, beating quite a few and beating the government as well. After her representation of Egyptian cleric Omar Abdel Rahman, for daring to speak out publicly in his defense, and delivering a message of his thoughts to the public, she was charged with conspiracy, providing material support to terrorists, convicted, sentenced to—after an appeal—ten years in federal prison, and disbarred.

Lynne, 73, is a breast cancer survivor, and recently the cancer has returned. Her treatment in federal custody is, to say the least, far from optimal. That ten years, increased by order of the Second Circuit Court of Appeals from 28 months, may prove a death sentence for a courageous, principled, and brilliant defense lawyer, who has been a bane to the state since she first walked into a courtroom.

Andrew Napolitano, former judge and conservative Fox TV contributor, has called the Stewart conviction a perverse victory for the Justice Department and a travesty of justice designed to intimidate all lawyers from vigorously advocating for their clients. To find out how you can help win justice for Lynne Stewart, contact: lynnestewart.org.

From imprisoned nation, this is Mumia Abu-Jamal.

©2013 Mumia Abu-Jamal

Sign the petition to free Lynne Stewart at lynnestewart.org. Send donations to: Lynne Stewart Organization, 1070 Dean Street, Brooklyn, New York 11216. Those wishing to correspond can send letters to: Lynne Stewart, #53504-054, Federal Medical Center, Carswell, P.O. Box 27137, Fort Worth, TX 76127.

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the heads of stable national governments defending well-established constitutional systems but as leaders of embattled political movements whose regimes were vulnerable to the play of social and political forces they struggled to control.

Lincoln knew from the moment McClellan came to Washington in July 1861 to assume command of the Army of the Potomac that "Little Mac," as he was called, had incessantly schemed and conspired and politicked to try to gain control of the administration. In August and September of 1862, Lincoln came to believe that McClellan was deliberately sabotaging the war effort and that the ideas being espoused at army headquarters were increasingly disloyal and treasonous. The capital was rife with rumors of plots and counterplots in the summer and fall. Colonel Thomas Key, who was on McClellan's staff, told a *New York Tribune* reporter that high officers in the Army of the Potomac were planning to "change front on Washington." McClellan's circle of confidants considered him to be the one man capable of saving the Union from both secession and radicalism, and the Army the only institution strong enough and loyal enough to control the administration.

Lee invaded Maryland and McClellan lucked out. He got a copy of Lee's order detailing the disposition of Confederate troops going into Maryland. So at Antietam the Union was able to thwart the Confederate invasion. But McClellan refused to go in for the kill, to destroy Lee's army. To his mind, that was not part of the plan.

Lincoln had not effected the strategic transformation he had envisioned in early July, the shift from a strategy of conciliation to a strategy of subjugation. That required the permanent sidelining of McClellan and the promulgation of the Emancipation Proclamation. But the victory at Antietam enabled Lincoln to issue the Emancipation Proclamation, which he did in preliminary form on September 22. But it also aggrandized McClellan, who opposed emancipation and was willing to use his power to thwart Lincoln. Additionally, on September 24, Lincoln authorized the suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus* anywhere in the country, which allowed the arrest and detention of those accused of being Confederate agents or sympathizers and the suppression of newspapers for sedition.

Madison County Historical Society

Frederick Douglass, seated at center, at anti-slavery meeting in New York State, 1850.

It remained to be seen whether the military leadership was prepared to fight a war of subjugation, an emancipation war. Lincoln and his cabinet worried about how McClellan would respond. Lincoln did not publicly acknowledge the existence of the McClellan conspiracy; to do so would be to provoke a direct and dangerous confrontation between civil and military authorities. McClellan was either disloyal or incompetent, or both. So he had to go. But how to get rid of him, when he had just won the Battle of Antietam and public opinion was still in a tizzy over the issuance of the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation and the suspension of *habeas corpus*? And all this was on the eve of midterm elections. This was not the Korean War of the 1950s, when the primacy of civil over military authority was already well-established. When General MacArthur objected to Harry Truman's war policies, Truman had a precedent for firing him. Plus, MacArthur was halfway around the world, not 70 miles from D.C.

Lincoln started weakening McClellan's position by exposing his flaws as a general, and McClellan had to decide what to do. He discussed it with his coterie in the army and prominent Democratic Party supporters who came to his camp up at Antietam, and even his pro-administration generals, all of whom advised him not to usurp civil authority. But McClellan did what he wanted. He issued an order to his army on the subject of the Emancipation Proclamation, carefully avoiding explicit opposition to the president but saying that the remedy for political errors, if any are committed, is to be found only in the action of the people at the polls, a clear challenge to the president. Furthermore, McClellan refused to move his army to attack Lee, again, despite direct orders. Lincoln waited until midterm elections were over (the Republicans got trounced, by the way) and removed McClellan from his generalship. McClellan accepted it passively.

TO BE CONTINUED

Israel...

(continued from page 1)

combating the Assad regime, have gained increasing prominence in the rebellion. This has complicated matters for the U.S. and Israeli rulers, who do not take lightly to the prospect of jihadists getting their hands on Syria's considerable weapons stockpile.

Many reformist outfits, such as the International Socialist Organization in the U.S., proclaim their solidarity with the "Syrian Revolution," thus giving support to the imperialists' attempts to oust Assad. The reformist Workers World Party, meanwhile, opposes the rebels but gives political credence to Assad, falsely portraying his and other Third World bourgeois-nationalist regimes as anti-imperialist. As we stated in "Imperialists' Hands Off Syria!" (*WV* No. 1009, 28 September 2012):

> "Revolutionary Marxists support neither side in this civil war, in which a victory of one combatant or the other would do nothing to further the cause of the working class and the oppressed. However, workers internationally *do* have a side in opposing military intervention by the imperialists. In the event of imperialist attack, we would stand for the defense of Syria while maintaining proletarian political opposition to Assad's blood-soaked rule."

Since at least early last year, the CIA has been active in Turkey, helping to determine which groups of anti-Assad rebels will receive arms purchased by U.S. allies Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Jordan. The Obama administration has been wary of directly intervening militarily into the conflict. However, when France and Britain last month sought (unsuccessfully) a green light from the European Union for arms shipments to the rebels, Secretary of State John Kerry declared that Washington "does not stand in the way." No sooner had Obama left Jerusalem than Kerry showed up in Baghdad, demanding that Iraq's Shi'ite-dominated, pro-Iranian government block arms shipments from Iran to the Assad regime through Iraqi airspace.

Steadily increasing belligerence toward Iran has been a hallmark of the Obama administration's policy in the Near East, together with withdrawing almost all troops from Iraq and drawing down U.S. forces in Afghanistan. American forces in Kuwait and the U.S. naval presence in the Persian Gulf have been reinforced. In the name of stopping the Islamic regime's purported drive to develop nuclear weapons, U.S. imperialism and its European allies have imposed ever more draconian economic sanctions on Iran, strangling its economy and exacting a devastating toll on the population. The imperialists have imposed similar sanctions on Syria in an effort to topple the Assad regime.

U.S. State Department

February 28: Secretary of State Kerry meets with pro-imperialist Syrian opposition leaders in Rome.

As Obama made clear during his trip to Israel, behind economic sanctions stands the threat of war. Whether or not Iran is moving toward developing nuclear weapons, it is surely not lost on Tehran that in today's world, possession of nukes is crucial to deterring military attack and resisting imperialist diktat. It is the duty of the U.S. proletariat to oppose sanctions and all other means by which "its own" ruling class seeks to further its interests around the world. This includes standing for the defense of Iran against any military attack by the imperialists or Israel.

As Marxists, our defense of Iran or Syria in the military sense does not imply the least political support to those countries' reactionary regimes, which enforce all-sided oppression and brutally repress labor struggle. But what must be understood is that it is U.S. imperialism that is the greatest danger to the working people and downtrodden of the planet. Nothing short of the overthrow of the capitalist-imperialist system through workers revolution will rid the world of this menace and open the road to a socialist future.

AP

Beirut: Sunnis protest attacks by Shi'ites, March 18, as Syrian civil war begins to spill over into Lebanon.

For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!

The dilemma of liberals in the U.S. who recognize and decry the desperate plight of the Palestinian people was well expressed by Columbia University professor Rashid Khalidi in an op-ed piece in the *New York Times* (12 March). Khalidi aptly observed that "America for many decades has helped produce a situation where, pious invocations of support for a Palestinian state notwithstanding, there is, and for the foreseeable future will be, only one true sovereign authority between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River: the state of Israel." Yet his proposed solution is to call on Obama "to chart a new course" based on support for the "Palestinian right to freedom, equality and statehood." Thus Khalidi counsels looking to U.S. imperialism, the very force that for decades has helped to ensure the Palestinians' oppression.

A similar dilemma faces Palestinian youth who seek an alternative to the utter prostration of the Palestinian Authority before the Zionists and their U.S. imperialist backers. A number of activists who are politically disenchanted with the Palestinian Authority have initiated a movement of "nonviolent popular resistance" against the Israeli occupation. The Israeli-Palestinian film *Five Broken Cameras*, which was nominated for a best-documentary Oscar, recounts the weekly protests in the West Bank village of Bil'in against the "separation fence" that cut the village off from most of its lands as part of building a settlement.

The transformation of yesterday's "freedom fighters" of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) into today's enforcers for Zionist occupation is rooted in the logic of petty-bourgeois nationalism. Despite the "people's war" rhetoric of Yasir Arafat's PLO in the late 1960s and early '70s, the Palestinian people have never had the social weight or the military strength to take on the nuclear-armed Zionist state. Yet the Arab regimes to which the PLO looked for support are no less the enemies of the Palestinian people than the Zionist oppressors. That has been repeatedly demonstrated, from the 1970 Black September massacre perpetrated by the Jordanian monarchy to the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian workers by Kuwait and Saudi Arabia following the U.S.-led "Desert Storm" war on Iraq in 1991.

In September 1993, the PLO signed the U.S.-brokered Oslo "peace accord" with Israel. We denounced that accord as a "grotesque bargain over the subjugated Palestinian people" that "would place the PLO's seal on the national oppression of the long-suffering Palestinian Arab masses" (*WV* No. 583, 10 September 1993). Underlying that betrayal was the destruction of the Soviet Union through capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92. Without the diplomatic and financial support previously provided by Moscow, the PLO (like other Third World nationalist movements and regimes) quickly came to terms with U.S. imperialism. Today, if many among the historically cosmopolitan Palestinian people have been driven into the arms of anti-Semitic, anti-women Islamic fundamentalists like Hamas, it is precisely because of the utter bankruptcy of Palestinian nationalism.

There will be no justice for the Palestinian people short of socialist revolution in Israel and throughout the region. Israel/Palestine is a case of two interpenetrated peoples who lay claim to the same piece of land. Assuring the right of national self-determination for both the Palestinian and Jewish peoples requires the proletarian overthrow of the Israeli capitalist rulers and also those of Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, which are home to several million Palestinians. Only through the creation of a planned economy in a socialist federation of the Near East can conflicting claims over land and resources be equitably resolved, and all discrimination on the basis of language, religion and nationality be done away with.

We have no illusions that it will be easy to break through the chauvinism that poisons the consciousness of the Jewish working people. However, like all capitalist societies, Israel is class-divided, with both Jewish and Arab as well as immigrant workers exploited by the same capitalist ruling class. It is the task of revolutionary Marxists to use every strike, every opportunity to widen the gap between Israel's workers and rulers, to convince the Israeli proletariat that it is in its interests to defend the Palestinians and to oppose the Zionist ruling class.

Long ago carved up by the imperialists, the Near East is a cauldron of peoples competing at the expense of each other. At the same time, imperialist penetration has created strategic concentrations of the proletariat, from Egypt's ports and textile factories to the Iranian oil fields. In the "Arab Spring" upheavals of the past two years, the dominant political players have been bourgeois forces—from military officers and liberals to Islamic fundamentalists—all of which are subordinate to imperialism and oppressors of their own population. The proletariat has not yet emerged as an independent force. What is needed is the construction of revolutionary internationalist workers parties, forged through irreconcilable struggle against bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalism and religious fundamentalism and committed to the program of world socialist revolution. ■

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Oakland...

(continued from page 12)

"allies in the community." His record as LAPD chief is particularly cited as an example. But the myth that Bratton transformed the corrupt, consummately racist Los Angeles cops into a kinder, gentler police force with good relations with black and Latino communities literally went up in the flames that engulfed ex-LAPD officer Christopher Dorner after cops fired pyrotechnic bombs into the cabin where he was hiding.

Dorner, who was fired after reporting a vicious assault on a suspect by his training officer, was driven to a homicidal vengeance, mainly targeting cops and their families, by his treatment at the hands of the LAPD. While obviously unhinged, Dorner's manifesto nonetheless provided a coherent picture of the unabated racism, corruption and sadism of the L.A. cops. And it struck a chord among blacks and Latinos who continue to be on the receiving end. As one man put it, "I don't defend what Dorner did, but like many in the community, I believe what he said." This was driven home after cops fired into the pickup truck of two Latino women delivering newspapers. The cops claimed that they thought the truck—driven by a 71-year-old woman who was shot twice in the back—was Dorner's. In response, other such potential "suspects" began wearing T-shirts and putting on bumper stickers saying they were not Dorner. And so goes the "reformed" LAPD.

But Bratton's main claim to fame is his "zero tolerance" policing, which spawned the mass targeting of black and Latino young men under the New York Police Department's "stop and frisk" roundups. In a statement of mind-blowing hypocrisy, Jean Quan piously proclaimed that "racial profiling will not be tolerated in the Oakland Police Department"! Bratton fired back: "For any city to say they don't do stop-and-frisk...I'm sorry, they don't know what the hell they are talking about. Every police department in America does it." Indeed they do, and singling out blacks and Latinos is the name of the game. For the Oakland cops, killing Alan Blueford was little more than another notch in their "stop and frisk" holsters.

The Dangerous Hoax of Police "Reform"

Outrage over the police lynching of Blueford has given rise to calls to fire the killer cop Masso and charge him with murder, as well as appeals to stop racial profiling and institute "stricter background checks, training, apprehension and gun use policies within the OPD." These demands have been taken up in motions by several union bodies, including SEIU service employees Local 1021, which organizes Oakland city workers, the San Francisco Labor Council and Bay Area Local 10 of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union.

AP

Parolee arrested in sting operation in Oakland, May 2010.

That these unions have gone on record protesting the racist terror of the OPD is important, particularly given the trade-union bureaucracy's frequent embrace of the strikebreaking cops as "union brothers." Moreover, integrated unions like the SEIU city workers and the ILWU are a vital link between the power of organized labor and the defense of the black and Latino poor in the inner cities. But far from offering a prospect of mobilizing the unions in protest against cop terror, appeals for police "reform" serve to deflect outrage over the cops into illusions that their political masters can be pressured to make them serve "the community." The last six decades of Oakland history stand as a living refutation of such arguments. Endless racist police atrocities have been followed by protests, probes, reports, reforms, police review boards and the occasional firing, and then by more atrocities, repeated ad nauseam.

As Marxists, we understand that the cops are one of the armed bodies of men—along with the military and the prisons—whose job is to protect America's capitalist rulers against the many whose blood and sweat make the profits for the few. American capitalism is a system built on a bedrock of racial oppression, from chattel slavery to wage slavery. Masses of black and Latino youth have simply been discarded by this country's callous rulers, left to live and die on the mean streets of the ghettos and barrios, to get gunned down by the cops or to rot in prison torture chambers. As the Labor Black League for Social Defense, which is fraternally allied with the Spartacist League/U.S., wrote in a statement following the coldblooded killing of Oscar Grant:

> "The hard truth is that there will be no end to police brutality short of the destruction of this entire system of capitalist exploitation and racial oppression. But a massive protest based on the organized muscle of the labor movement would give the cops and their capitalist masters some pause. And it would drive home the point that the interests of the working class are inseparably linked to the defense of the ghetto and barrios, the defense of immigrant rights and the fight for black freedom."

Instead, the trade-union misleaders promote suicidal illusions in reforming this system, particularly through the agency of the Democratic Party. The price has been paid in the devastation of the unions and the increasingly depraved conditions of life for those who have been cast off as useless to the system of production for profit.

Reformist Dementia: The ISO's "Crime Fighting" Program

Seizing on statistics showing a recent rise in crime in Oakland, the cops and their political masters have been whipping up a "crime wave" hysteria. Backed by community preachers, Oakland's deputy mayor demanded that a state of emergency be declared. With the bourgeois press calling Oakland the most violent city in California, Mayor Quan is trying to get funding for more cops from the Obama administration.

Pandering to this crime scare, an article titled "What Will Stop the Violence in Oakland?" on the International Socialist Organization's (ISO) *Socialist Worker* Web site declares that "the streets of Oakland are reeling from a seemingly unstoppable spike in street crime and murders." Arguing that hiring more cops "is probably the worst way to deal with the crisis"(!), the ISO asks, "What if the Oakland City Council and Mayor Jean Quan fired all the cops...and exchanged badges for jobs?" From here they go on to calculate the millions that could be redirected to create an "army of community workers" to "develop recreation and art programs in our poorest neighborhoods" and help in "organizing a gang truce." The idea that the political representatives of the capitalist state would abolish the cops who serve on the front lines in defending the rule of American capitalism is reformist dementia on amphetamines.

Street crime in poverty-ridden neighborhoods like East Oakland is real and violently ugly. It targets primarily the poor and working people who live there amid the social rot and other pathologies generated by the racist workings of the capitalist system. Preachers and many others in the black middle class call to "stop the violence" by bringing in more cops. These sentiments are often shared by many residents of the inner cities who then find themselves on the receiving end of the rampaging OPD thugs.

To wipe out the systematic demonization and degradation of ghetto and barrio youth requires shattering the capitalist system and the state that defends it. Only by creating its own state power can the workers expropriate the capitalist class and its enormous wealth, instituting a planned, socialist economy that provides jobs and quality housing, education and health care—in short, a real future—for all. This requires building a multiracial revolutionary workers party to lead the workers in struggle as champions of all the oppressed. Such a party can only be forged in political struggle against the current pro-capitalist leaders of the labor movement and their small-time reformist hangers-on. ■

Canada...

(continued from page 5)

mine generates over $400 million a year in revenue. De Beers pays a lousy $2 million a year in royalties to the Attawapiskat Cree, most of which is buried in stocks and bonds under a trust agreement—chump change for this immensely profitable and wealthy corporation. Attawapiskat protesters have blockaded the mine to press their demands for jobs, housing and environmental protections. De Beers responded with an injunction from the Timmins Superior Court accusing them of "extortion."

There is a fundamental class divide in society between the capitalists—the tiny group of families that own industry and the banks—and the working class, whose labour is the source of the capitalists' profits. The working class has the potential power and historic interest to sweep away the capitalist system and rebuild society based on a centralized, planned economy that serves human need, not profit. It is this social power to stop the flow of profits that must be mobilized in defense of Native rights.

A majority of the approximately 1.3 million aboriginal people in Canada live in the cities, where the working class is concentrated. Put simply, the future for Native rights lies with the class struggle. Labour's struggles and those of the Native peoples will either go forward together or fall back separately. Trade unions including the Canadian Labour Congress declared their solidarity with Idle No More. But this is light years from what is necessary. The isolation of the Native protests from the social power of the working class is a direct reflection of the fact that the labour movement itself is quiescent and on the defensive. This sharply undercuts the possibility of any amelioration of the conditions facing aboriginal peoples.

Warrior Publications

Mohawk fighters at Oka, Quebec, during 77-day standoff with police, 1990.

A fighting labour movement would not only use its power to champion Native rights, but would take concrete steps such as aggressive union-run recruitment and training programs. Such programs would be a first step toward breaking the cycle of unemployment and social marginalization. Labour must also be mobilized against acts of racist state terror to make it clear that Native people do not stand alone in their struggles.

The fight against Native oppression provides a litmus test for those aspiring to lead the working class. A party that does not inscribe the defense of the most downtrodden high on its banner will never succeed in leading the proletariat against its class enemy. We seek to build a revolutionary workers party that champions the cause of all the oppressed in the struggle for socialist revolution. To open up a future for the Native peoples will take the establishment of an egalitarian socialist society under workers rule. As we state in our *Programmatic Theses*:

> "Only the destruction of capitalism can hold out the possibility of voluntary integration, on the basis of full equality, for those aboriginal peoples who desire it and the fullest possible regional autonomy for those who do not. The Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste demands that whatever residual rights Native peoples have been able to maintain, whether through treaty agreements or otherwise, be respected."
>
> —"Who We Are, and What We Fight For" (1998)

The stark fact is that in this capitalist society—whether run by the Tory reactionaries or their Liberal and NDP rivals—Native people have no chance at a decent future. Only the destruction of the bourgeoisie's barbaric profit system and the inauguration of the era of socialist development can redress centuries of crimes against the aboriginal peoples of this country. ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

There's No "Reforming" the Gang in Blue

Oakland Cops: Racist Killers on the Loose

On March 6, William Bratton, the former chief of the Los Angeles and New York police departments who was recently hired as special "consultant" to the Oakland Police Department (OPD), rode into a press conference in Oakland at the head of a posse of fellow ex-top cops from around the country. *San Francisco Chronicle* (7 March) columnist Chip Johnson enthused: "In another era they could have been wearing cowboy hats, dusters and cradling rifles in their folded arms. However you want to envision it, the message they sent was clear: 'We're here to clean up this town'." Their "war on crime" roundup was launched with a vengeance in the early morning hours of March 8. Some 200 cops busted into homes in East Oakland and three suburbs, arresting more than 18 supposed gang members.

Backing up the Oakland cops were federal, state and county police agencies including the FBI, the U.S. Attorney's Office, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the California Highway Patrol and Department of Justice as well as the Alameda County Sheriff's office. In short, this deliberate display of racist police terror was orchestrated from the top: Obama's Attorney General, Eric Holder, together with Democratic California governor Jerry Brown and his state attorney general Kamala Harris and Oakland's "progressive" Democratic Party mayor, Jean Quan. The day before, Brown, Harris and former CIA chief and defense secretary Leon Panetta were on the podium before a chilling mobilization of thousands of police at a memorial for two Santa Cruz officers killed by an apparently deranged former military cop on February 26. Police forces in four Bay Area cities had earlier exacted vengeance for their fallen brethren in a shooting spree, killing four "suspects" in one 27-hour period.

The calling card in the Oakland raids was a letter from OPD chief Howard Jordan warning "individuals who are at risk of being involved in gun violence," i.e., the residents of the overwhelmingly black and Latino neighborhood: "This is how we will be working from now on." Serving as a racist occupying army in the inner cities is how the cops have ***always*** operated, everywhere. The brutal enforcement of capitalist rule is their joh, whether in the ghettos and barrios or on the picket lines. The Oakland cops are such infamous frame-up artists, thugs and killers that the police department came within a hair's breadth of hecoming the first in the U.S. to be put into federal receivership. Instead, at the urging of Mayor Quan and the Oakland City Council, the federal judge appointed a "compliance director" to oversee "reforms" mandated by a court order almost a decade ago.

That order came out of a lawsuit in 2000 by victims of a gang of Oakland cops known as the Riders, who rampaged through the West Oakland ghetto beating, robbing and planting drugs and guns on young black men. The Riders were so notorious that three were even put on trial, only to be acquitted on all charges by a jury that included not a single black person. In response to the subsequent lawsuit, the City of Oakland agreed to a settlement including a court mandate that the cops clean up their act through the implementation of some 50 largely procedural reforms.

Reuters

Indymedia

Left: Oakland police brutalize man at July 2010 protest over transit cop's killing of Oscar Grant. Above: Alan Blueford, gunned down by OPD in May 2012.

For nine years, the OPD has collectively given the finger to the federal judge—Thelton Henderson, a black man—charged with overseeing compliance with this order. A picture of Henderson was defaced with racist graffiti by cops while a flyer posted at the OPD's firing range threatened: "You shut the f--k up. We'll protect America. Keep out of our f--king way, liberal pussies." Out on the streets, their lethal swagger didn't miss a beat. From 2000 to 2012, nearly 550 police abuse lawsuits were filed, with the city shelling out over $57 million in defense of their thugs in blue.

In October 2011, the massive police assault against Occupy Oakland protesters made international headlines. Cops cracked heads with clubs while hurling tear gas and flash-bang grenades, nearly killing Iraq War veteran Scott Olsen, who was shot in the head with a pellet-loaded beanbag. A subsequent investigation into repeated police attacks on Occupy showed the cops covering up their name badges and turning off lapel cameras, violating two of the "reforms" that had purportedly been instituted. But such transgressions are a mere tip of the iceberg. According to an article in the *East Bay Express* (10 October 2012), other evidence of the cops' "compliance" with the court order includes an OPD police academy instructor telling new recruits that the Oakland cops shoot people more now because under the court order they are no longer allowed to beat them up! And the cops' kill rate has steadily mounted.

Killings and Cover-Ups

Among the cops' victims were two unarmed men who were pulled over in separate traffic stops. Andrew Moppin-Buckskin was gunned down in December 2007. In July 2008, Jody Woodfox was killed hy the same OPD cop, Hector Jimenez. Jimenez was fired, hut two years later he was hack on the force. In 2011, in front of Skyline High, school district police officer Barhin Bhatt shot student Raheim Brown five times, twice in the head, killing him. Cleared by the DA, Bhatt is still on the job.

Cheryl Hurd

Former LAPD and NYPD police chief William Bratton (right), now "consultant" to Oakland cops, with OPD chief Howard Jordan, March 6.

Last May 6, Oakland cops killed 18-year-old black Skyline student Alan Blueford, weeks before his graduation. Blueford and two friends had been accosted by plainclothes police on an East Oakland street. Understandably afraid, Blueford ran and was chased down and shot to death by Officer Miguel Masso. No attempt was made to contact Blueford's parents even after he was finally taken to Highland Hospital, where he was pronounced dead on arrival. The OPD cover-up machine immediately went into high gear. First the cops claimed that Blueford had died in a "gun battle" with the police in which Masso had been shot. Later it was revealed that Masso had ***shot himself*** in the foot. Twelve witnesses testified that Blueford had no weapon.

It took a courageous months-long struggle by Blueford's parents and their supporters, including a protest the weekend following the killing, even to extract the coroner's report and, much later, a highly redacted police report on the shooting. The Bluefords continue to fight on behalf of their son and other victims of the marauding OPD, recently joining hundreds of other Oakland residents at a City Council meeting to protest the hiring of Bratton. On the other side, Mayor Quan and city councilors were backed by black preachers in promoting Bratton as the way to "reduce crime" in Oakland's destitute ghettos. Exposing this lethal fraud, Cephus Johnson, uncle of Oscar Grant—the 22-year-old hlack man killed in cold blood by BART transit cop Johannes Mehserle on New Year's Day 2009—argued: "You will create a war zone likc you've never seen before...these intrusive measures are why my nephew is dead, why Oscar Grant is dead, why Alan Blueford is dead."

Days after Bratton was hired, police announced that they would be dividing the city into five separate war zones to more effectively prosecute the racist "war on crime." This is being sold as the implementation of Bratton's policies of making

continued on page 11

WORKERS VANGUARD

50¢

No. 1022 19 April 2013

Guantánamo Hunger Strike: Free the Detainees Now!

APRIL 15—A mass hunger strike at the U.S. military's Guantánamo detention center in Cuba is now in its third month. Precipitated by a raid in February during which prisoners' Korans were desecrated, the hunger strike includes a number of men who are near death as they protest being consigned to endless incarceration in the prison's notorious torture chambers. Lawyers for the detainees report that some 130 prisoners are participating in the hunger strike, with the military force-feeding 13 of them. As one striker told attorney David Remes, detainees "feel like they're living in graves" (*Al Jazeera*, 19 March). There has been at least one attempted suicide as well as reports of prisoners coughing up blood and others hospitalized for dehydration. On April 13, shortly after a Red Cross delegation investigating the strike had left the camp, guards fired "non-lethal" rounds at prisoners who resisted being forcibly moved to single-cell lockups. In another display of cruelty, a federal judge today dismissed an emergency motion from a hunger striker that sought an end to the mistreatment, sneering that the prisoner had "self-manufactured" his condition.

The hunger strike is a cry of despair over the legal limbo that detainees have suffered under since U.S. imperialism launched its "war on terror" following the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. As the U.S./NATO began its murderous occupation of Afghanistan, hundreds of detainees were incarcerated indefinitely without a shred of legal rights. Of the 166 men still imprisoned at Guantánamo, 86 were cleared for release years ago. Most of the remaining 80 have not been charged with any crime, and only 30 detainees are subjects of active "investigations."

A March 14 letter to Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel by detainees' attorneys described the prisoners as "feeling hopeless in the face of 11 years of detention without prospect of release or trial and the continuing inability of the

continued on page 3

More Austerity for Working People

Imperialist Bankers Strangle Cyprus

AP

Reuters

Left: Cypriots line up on March 28 to withdraw money from bank after savings were threatened by "bailout" scheme imposed by European Union. Right: Bank workers in Nicosia march on parliament to protest threat to pensions, April 4.

For a Socialist United States of Europe!

The following article was written by the Trotskyist Group of Greece, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

Unable to contain the debt crisis that has roiled the European Union (EU) since 2010, the imperialist overlords of the EU and their International Monetary Fund (IMF) cronies have struck again. Their latest "rescue package" for the bloodsucking banks, centered as always on savage attacks against working people, is aimed at the tiny Republic of Cyprus—the southern, Greek Cypriot state on the partitioned island. The Troika of the IMF, European Central Bank and EU responded to the Republic of Cyprus' request for funds to prop up its failing banks by demanding nothing less than the destruction of its economy as an offshore banking and tax haven. As reported in the *Cyprus Mail* (23 March): "German Chancellor Angela Merkel told lawmakers that while she wanted to keep Cyprus in the eurozone, it must first recognise it had no future as an offshore financial centre for wealthy Russians and Britons."

What sent shockwaves through the populations of EU member states was not the demand that the Greek Cypriot government raise funds through an austerity program of the kind already imposed on Greece, Ireland and Portugal—slashing wages, benefits, jobs, health care and education. It was the initial demand that the Republic of Cyprus tax the deposits of anyone with money in its banks. This provoked a rebellion by the parliament, which aptly referred to it as "bank robbery." More importantly, it raised the spectre that people would rush to pull their money from teetering banks in the euro zone (countries using the euro currency), causing a banking collapse in the much larger economies of countries like Spain. A run on the Greek Cypriot banks

continued on page 10

On Caste and Women's Oppression in India

7 March 2013

To the editor:

We agree with the political substance of your February 8, 2013 article [*WV* No. 1017] on the Delhi rape protests. We are writing to comment on the wording of a few passages.

You refer to mob attacks by caste Hindus on "entire dalit villages." The village is a basic social unit in rural India. Caste arises from an enforced, hereditary division of labor *within* the village. A village is thus necessarily made up of several castes, each of which traditionally has its own segregated place inside it to live. The place allotted to dalits (as untouchables are now known among journalists and activists) is typically farthest from the village center, at or just beyond the boundary of the village proper. To call these settlements "dalit villages" is to suggest that dalits have an independent society. Whereas in fact, as Harsh Mander points out in his preface to *Untouchability in Rural India* by Ghanshyam Shah et al. (2006), "[u]nlike the tribal people in India, who have lived until recently in relative isolation from the dominant culture, society and economy, Dalits have always been an integral part of these, but placed at the bottom." Thus, for instance, the areas attacked by Vanniyar-caste mobs in an incident in Tamil Nadu last November which you go on to cite were dalit *colonies* attached to Vanniyar-dominated villages.

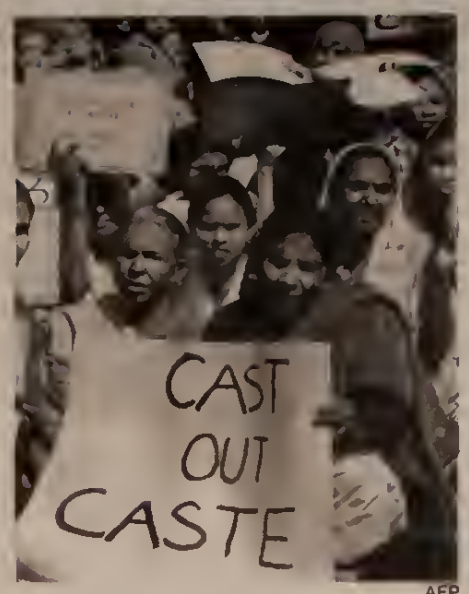
We question your skeptical use of quotation marks around the word *upper* in the phrase "'upper' caste." Hierarchy is inherent to the caste system. Insofar as there are castes (which is to say, not in nature but in social reality), there are indeed higher ones and lower ones. Obviously, communists are not for the equality of castes (a contradiction in terms, like "separate but equal"), but for a casteless society.

You write that "Congress co-opted dalit leader B.R. Ambedkar to head up the drafting of the constitution, which banned 'untouchability' but left the caste system intact." We are concerned, first of all, that this might give the impression that untouchability has been effectively outlawed in India. While the Indian government regularly cites the provision of its constitution to which you allude and related legislation to defend itself against international criticism, this "de jure prohibition," as the bourgeois humanitarian group Human Rights Watch has rightly observed, "does not reflect the daily reality of the continued practice of 'untouchability' and persecution of Dalits in India. Dalits are systematically discriminated against and abused by public authorities and private actors, who act without any fear of punishment as they rarely face sanctions for their violations of Dalits' fundamental rights." (*Hidden Apartheid: Caste Discrimination Against India's "Untouchables,"* 2007) In the second place, your implied criticism of the Indian constitution for having "left the caste system intact" could be taken to suggest that caste can be removed by an act of legislation. In reality, as you go on to say at the end of the article, it is "the enormous task of eliminating scarcity" which only a proletarian revolution will inaugurate that can "alone lay the *material* basis for eradicating the oppression of women and caste." A revolutionary workers government will of necessity wage an active fight against caste oppression and caste-based discrimination in all its forms. But like the family—that fundamental locus of women's oppression with which in South Asia it is inseparably bound up—caste cannot simply be abolished. Rather, its real social and economic function must be replaced within an egalitarian socialist order founded on abundance.

Fraternally,
Alan and Sarah

WV replies:

We appreciate the point in this letter that *dalit* colonies are not separate villages but physically segregated areas within the village structure. The village is central to caste domination and to women's oppression, as we noted in the article: "Caste oppression is enforced through the *panchayat* system of village councils that dictate what is acceptable in all aspects of social relations. These councils have the authority to punish anything from cross-caste marriages to violations of dress codes for women. Women's liberation and the destruction of the caste system are inextricably bound together."



AFP

Christian and Muslim *dalit* ("untouchable") women demonstrate in New Delhi, March 2007.

The Indian constitution *formally* outlawed untouchability. However, as our article made clear, this had little effect on the reality of caste oppression. The caste system was preserved and strengthened, not only under British colonial rule but also after independence. As our article noted, Ambedkar himself said: "The same old tyranny, the same old oppression, the same old discrimination which existed before, exists now, and perhaps in a worse form."

Elsewhere in the article we warn against liberal illusions that the Indian capitalist state will legislate the hideous oppression of women or of caste out of existence. We wrote that dowry deaths are widespread, but "the practice of dowry has been prohibited by law since 1961—so much for the liberal notion that rape and violence against women can be ended by legislation." As for equality for women, we noted:

> "The explosive nature of any attempt to fight against the oppression of women in India gives the lie to the liberal pipe dream of effecting a gradual transition to equality for women through reliance on the state and its laws. Indeed, women's equality is already enshrined in the Indian constitution, for all the good that does. The burning issues facing women pose questions that only proletarian revolution can answer."

The political premise of our article is that the Indian bourgeoisie is incapable of bringing about an end to the caste system or to the oppression of women, which are deeply rooted in capitalist rule in that country. India represents a striking confirmation of the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution, which means that only a workers and peasants government can lead India's masses out of the depths of poverty and grinding exploitation. Working-class power on an international scale, throughout the subcontinent and extended to the imperialist centers, will lay the basis for genuine equality for all. ■

Imperialism: Monopoly Capitalism

TROTSKY

LENIN

Writing during World War I, Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin defined imperialism as the most advanced stage of capitalist development, with the industrial powers oppressing weaker states in their drive to reap ever more profit. The ongoing crisis in the European Union and the rest of the capitalist world demonstrates yet again that the only way out for the working class and the oppressed is through socialist revolutions that expropriate the bourgeoisie's capital and establish an internationally planned socialist economy.

Imperialism emerged as the development and direct continuation of the fundamental characteristics of capitalism in general. But capitalism only became capitalist imperialism at a definite and very high stage of its development, when certain of its fundamental characteristics began to change into their opposites, when the features of the epoch of transition from capitalism to a higher social and economic system had taken shape and revealed themselves in all spheres. Economically, the main thing in this process is the displacement of capitalist free competition by capitalist monopoly. Free competition is the basic feature of capitalism, and of commodity production generally; monopoly is the exact opposite of free competition, but we have seen the latter being transformed into monopoly before our eyes, creating large-scale industry and forcing out small industry, replacing large-scale by still larger-scale industry, and carrying concentration of production and capital to the point where out of it has grown and is growing monopoly: cartels, syndicates and trusts, and merging with them, the capital of a dozen or so banks, which manipulate thousands of millions. At the same time the monopolies, which have grown out of free competition, do not eliminate the latter, but exist above it and alongside it, and thereby give rise to a number of very acute, intense antagonisms, frictions and conflicts....

Without forgetting the conditional and relative value of all definitions in general, which can never embrace all the concatenations of a phenomenon in its full development, we must give a definition of imperialism that will include the following five of its basic features:

(1) the concentration of production and capital has developed to such a high stage that it has created monopolies which play a decisive role in economic life; (2) the merging of bank capital with industrial capital, and the creation, on the basis of this "finance capital," of a financial oligarchy; (3) the export of capital as distinguished from the export of commodities acquires exceptional importance; (4) the formation of international monopolist capitalist associations which share the world among themselves, and (5) the territorial division of the whole world among the biggest capitalist powers is completed. Imperialism is capitalism at that stage of development at which the dominance of monopolies and finance capital is established; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of the world among the international trusts has begun, in which the division of all territories of the globe among the biggest capitalist powers has been completed.

—V.I. Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916)

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Waco Massacre: We Will Not Forget

April 19 marks the 20th anniversary of the government's massacre of over 80 men, women and children of the integrated Branch Davidian religious sect outside Waco, Texas. For more than seven weeks, an array of police forces had laid siege to the Branch Davidian compound following a raid by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms aimed at arresting the group's leader, David Koresh, on false charges of illegal weapons possession. The government was out for blood—and lots of it—after four Feds were killed in the initial assault, which took the life of a two-year-old girl and a number of church members. Finally, the state got its revenge through a massive attack that burned the compound to the ground, with the trapped members of the sect perishing in the inferno.

Reuters

Getty

19 April 1993: Mass murder of Branch Davidians in Waco, Texas, ordered by President Bill Clinton and Attorney General Janet Reno.

From the outset of the siege, the Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee—a class-struggle legal and social defense organization associated with the SL—protested the government vendetta against the Branch Davidians. On 8 March 1993, as tanks rolled into Waco, the PDC sent a protest to Democratic president Bill Clinton demanding that "all troops, tanks, police and federal agents be removed from the area." The letter pointed out, "We think you would do well to take the advice of the newly elected President Lincoln, who when asked what he proposed to do about the polygamous Mormons replied, 'I propose to let them alone'."

Attorney General Janet Reno justified the assault by raising the spectre of "child abuse." This was forcefully answered by Bob Buck, a West Virginia steel worker who had been railroaded to prison for defending his union on the picket line during a bitter 1991-92 strike. In a letter to the PDC, Buck wrote: "They were so damned concerned for the children they unleashed an armed assault on the house they lived in and filled it full of bullet holes;...gassed them, and ultimately burned them to death. Ain't America great. I'm glad Mrs. Reno isn't concerned about me."

The SL and PDC protested the Waco holocaust outside federal offices in New York, Boston, Chicago and San Francisco. Shamefully, the reformist left turned a blind eye to the atrocity or joined in blaming the victims, just as almost every one of them did when Philadelphia's black Democratic mayor Wilson Goode ordered the bombing of the predominantly black MOVE commune in 1985. Our intention was, and is, to sear the memory of these acts of government mass murder into the consciousness of the working class, whose historic interest lies in revolutionary struggle to sweep away the murderous capitalist state.

We print below the bulk of the press release issued by the SL announcing the protest demonstrations, which began in Manhattan the day of the massacre.

* * *

The charred corpses of 87 men, women and children who perished in the firestorm resulting from the FBI's barrage of CS gas, flash-grenades and battering rams are the direct responsibility of the White House. President Clinton gave the green light, Attorney General Janet Reno personally supervised the plan, and the FBI's storm troopers moved in to carry out the government's "final solution" against the small, integrated Branch Davidian religious sect in Waco, Texas. After a murderous raid by federal Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agents armed to the teeth and a 51-day siege, almost a hundred people have now been subjected to a flaming apocalypse for the sole "crime" of being a non-conformist religious sect which dared to defend itself against government assault.

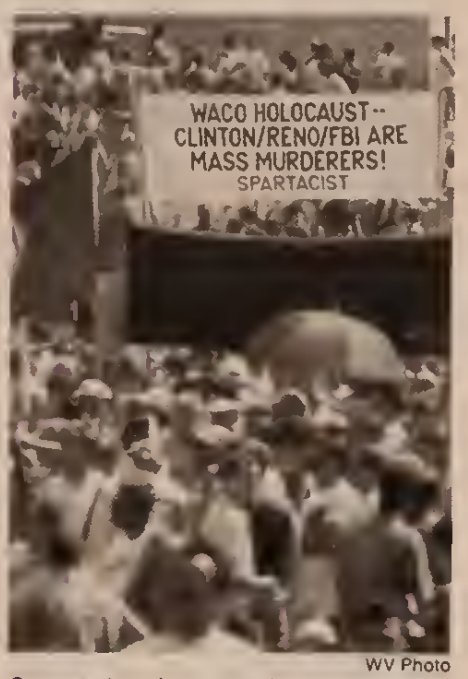
An SL spokesman, in condemning this outrage, noted that the Branch Davidians received the same death sentence meted out to the black MOVE commune in Philadelphia, bombed by the Philadelphia police on Mother's Day (May 13) 1985, using C-4 plastic explosives donated by the FBI. Eleven black people were murdered there, including five children, and an entire black neighborhood was laid to waste. "Like the racist cop beating of L.A. black motorist Rodney King," said Spartacist spokesman Marjorie Stamberg, "the Waco holocaust is the domestic image of America's 'New World Order.' This is U.S. imperialism's 'Desert Slaughter' in Iraq brought home."

A banner outside the compound of the racially integrated Branch Davidian religious sect said, "Rodney King—We Understand." It is no accident that the feds' onslaught in Waco came two days after the slap-on-the-wrist verdict for two racist cops in L.A. With troops poised to occupy the inner cities coast to coast, amid a massive police-state mobilization, the racist rulers breathed a collective sigh of relief that the urban ghettos and barrios did not explode in outrage over another outright racist acquittal. They seized the moment to incinerate the Waco commune.

In the gray light of dawn, the FBI moved in the heavy artillery—M-60 Combat Engineering Vehicles, Bradley fighting vehicles and heat-seeking reconnaissance planes—in a bid to drive out or exterminate the 70 adults and 25 children still inside the wooden structure. The whole area had already been ringed with razor-sharp concertina wire. Electricity and water were cut off. The intent was to create a firetrap with no escape. Naturally there were no firefighting vehicles present to put out the flames. Now the government wants to blame the victims, but *the Waco assault was deliberate mass murder, decided at the White House.*

On Sunday, Vice President Al Gore wept tears for those who died 50 years ago in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. But the methodical burning down of the Waco commune, carried "live" on television, recalled nothing so much as the Nazis' razing of the Warsaw ghetto. Clinton/Gore have carried out their own holocaust against another religious minority who evidently have "no right to exist" in this racist capitalist society. The Clinton administration has carried out its own Operation Prairie Slaughter, igniting a massive firestorm against its perceived domestic "enemies," a small group who did no harm to anyone.

The Spartacist League spokesman noted, "From Republican Bush to Democrat Clinton, the racist rulers show what they have in store for anyone who dares to defy the state. The murder of these innocent people, burned at the stake by this bloodthirsty government, cries out for vengeance. It will take a socialist revolution to mete out real justice to the police torturers of Rodney King, to the FBI arsonists in Waco, to the U.S. military bombers of Baghdad." ■



WV Photo

Spartacist League banner at 25 April 1993 Washington gay rights demonstration.

Guantánamo...

(continued from page 1)

political branches to carry through on their commitment to close the prison in a just manner" (ccrjustice.org). It is not only that Barack Obama has reneged on his 2008 campaign pledge to close Guantánamo. The letter reports "a background of increasingly regressive practices at the prison taking place in recent months," described by prisoners as a return to conditions in the Bush era that were widely recognized as constituting torture.

Hunger striker Shaker Aamer is one of those who have been held since 2002, never charged, never tried or convicted, cleared to go home but still in detention despite protest from the government of Britain, where his family resides. In a statement published in the *New Statesman* (5 April), Aamer describes the plight of Yemeni detainee Abu Bakr, a/k/a "171," who has been on hunger strike since 2005 and has now become a special target of the prison administrator: "Back in October, 171 was tied in the feeding chair, and just left there for 52 hours. Then, from 4 January, he was isolated for a full month.... He thinks they'll kill him off, to encourage the others to give up their strike."

In an op-ed piece in the *New York Times* (14 April), another Yemeni hunger striker, Samir Naji al Hasan Moqbel, movingly recounted his ordeal, not least the excruciating pain of the force-feedings. Moqbel observed: "The only reason I am still here is that President Obama refuses to send any detainees back to Yemen." Indeed, the U.S. president in early 2010 halted the repatriation of detainees to Yemen under the pretext of "current security conditions" in that country. Today, a majority of the remaining Guantánamo detainees are Yemeni nationals. With the detentions provoking protests in Yemen, its president, who has given his unqualified blessing to the U.S. campaign of terror-by-drone in Yemen, felt compelled to intone: "We believe that keeping someone in prison for over ten years without due process is clear-cut tyranny."

Whereas the Bush administration rounded up hundreds of men (some under 18 years old) and tossed them into the CIA secret prison and rendition network, the Obama White House has preferred to simply kill its targets, mainly through drone strikes. At the same time, under Obama's plan to shutter Guantánamo, the system of indefinite detention would have continued, simply relocated onto American soil. But with Congress working to ensure that Guantánamo remain a detention center, the military's Southern Command has requested up to $170 million to upgrade existing facilities and an additional $49 million for a new prison building to hold "special" detainees.

Meanwhile, the Obama administration cynically paints the force-feeding of prisoners—officially recognized by the United Nations and others as a form of torture—as supposedly protecting their safety and welfare. This was too much even for the Obama-friendly *New York Times*, which ran a 5 April editorial declaring that "the truly humane response to this crisis is to free prisoners who have been approved for release, end indefinite detention and close the prison at Guantánamo." For such bourgeois liberals, Guantánamo stains the veneer of "democracy" with which America's capitalist rulers cover their depredations around the world.

As revolutionary proletarian opponents of imperialism, we call for closing Guantánamo as well as for the release of all the remaining detainees, despite the enormous gulf between our Marxist worldview and that of the reactionary Islamist forces that the detainees are alleged to support. Our program is not that of liberal reformers who seek to perfect the mechanisms of imperialist rule by cleaning up its "excesses." Our fight is to mobilize the working class in opposition to imperialist wars and occupations and in defense of all the exploited and oppressed, a struggle that must culminate in proletarian revolution to destroy the imperialists' machinery of state terror once and for all. ■

Neo-Apartheid Police Terrorize Workers, Immigrants, Township Poor

South Africa

JOHANNESBURG—On February 26, in broad daylight, nine police gruesomely tortured Mozambican taxi driver Emidio Macia before the eyes of dozens of people in Daveyton, east of Johannesburg, before he died in custody. A video taken by someone in the crowd shows the cops tying Macia's hands to a police van and dragging him away toward the police station, where he died of head injuries, internal bleeding and lack of oxygen. As the horrific images of the dragging went around the world, there has been an outpouring of anger over this latest demonstration of naked cop terror. The killing of Macia came just over six months after the Marikana massacre of 16 August 2012, when police gunned down 34 striking black mineworkers like wild animals. As one protester put it, on a placard held at a demonstration outside the bail hearing for the cops who killed Macia: "What Have We Done to Die Like Dogs?"

In response to the outcry, the police brass and ministers of the Tripartite Alliance government, which is led by the African National Congress (ANC) and includes the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), have gone into "PR mode," feigning shock and dismay at the actions of the Daveyton cops. Don't be fooled for a second by this cynical stage acting: These are the top cops responsible for commanding the whole machinery of racist state repression, and they have no qualms about spilling the blood of workers and the oppressed to maintain the rule of capital. Take police commissioner Riah Phiyega, who cried crocodile tears for Macia and condemned the cops in a press conference the week after the killing. Directly after the Marikana massacre, Phiyega told a gathering of cops, "Don't be sorry about what happened."

President Jacob Zuma and Police Minister Nathi Mthethwa ludicrously try to portray the Daveyton cops as just a few "bad apples" in an otherwise benevolent police force. Just a few weeks after the Daveyton incident, another cop was arrested in North West Province for an assault just like the one that killed Macia! The victim in this case, a court interpreter, was targeted because he had advised a youth being harassed by two policemen. According to Independent Police Investigative Directorate spokesman Moses Dlamini, one of the cops "grabbed the complainant by the neck and asked him if he knew what police were capable of these days" before dragging him for 100 metres behind a police car.

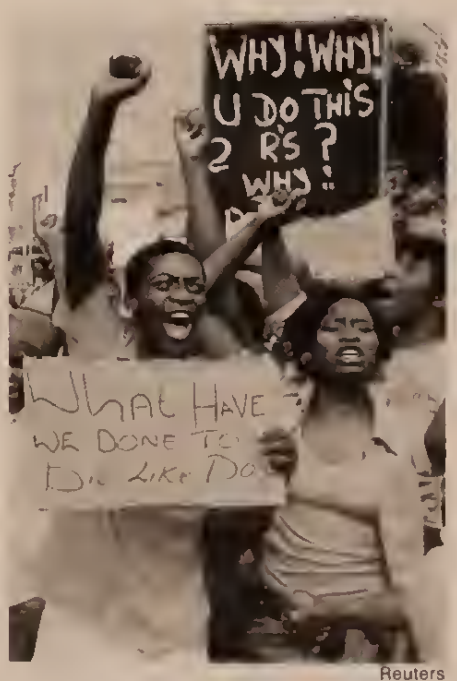
In the face of erupting social discontent, the bourgeois Alliance tops have increasingly given the police free rein to terrorise striking workers, immigrants and the township poor. Here are some of the other people killed by police and private security guards during strikes and service delivery protests over just the past two years: Petros Msiza, a shop steward from the COSATU-affiliated South African Municipal Workers Union who was picketing during a March 2011 strike by bus and refuse workers in Tshwane/Pretoria; Andries Tatane, a teacher and activist, during a service delivery protest in Meqheleng, Ficksburg, in Free State Province in April 2011; three farmworkers in De Doorns and other towns in the Western Cape during the farmworkers strike between November 2012 and January 2013; four people during service delivery protests in February in Zamdela township, Sasolburg, in the Free State. The list goes on and on.

AFP

Daily Sun

Above: March 6 memorial service for Mozambican taxi driver Emidio Macia in Daveyton township. Shown shackled to police van in video still at left, February 26, Macia died in custody after being dragged to police station.

Last year, 30 cops from the infamous Cato Manor Organised Crime Unit in KwaZulu-Natal were charged with over 100 crimes, including 19 counts of murder. In Cape Town, 12 cops are also facing murder charges. There have been numerous reports of torture of arrested protesters, including many survivors of the Marikana massacre and strike leaders from other mines whom the cops have tried to intimidate. Over 900 people died in police custody in the space of a year during the reporting period 2008-09, a number that declined only slightly to 720 during the reporting period 2011-12. According to Cape Town journalist Palesa Morudu, "The highest number of killings by the apartheid police reached 763 in 1985, the year PW Botha declared a state of emergency" ("Human Rights Lessons from Mthethwa and Company," *Business Day*, 12 March).



Reuters

Protesters at March 8 bail hearing for cops who killed Macia.

The Tripartite Alliance government administers the capitalist state in defence of the same capitalist system as under apartheid and British colonial rule—a system that is still based on the superexploitation of mainly black labour and the grinding oppression of the mass of the non-white majority. And they have borrowed wholesale from the repressive machinery of apartheid white minority rule. Don't forget that some 270 Marikana mineworkers who survived the massacre were initially charged by the National Prosecuting Authority for murdering their own comrades on the basis of the aparthcid-era "common cause" law! Many of these and other striking mineworkers still face various charges. ***Drop all the charges against wildcot strikers!*** It is urgently necessary for the entire working class to defend these workers and other victims of police repression, because otherwise the cops will be emboldened to clamp down on all of labour. ***An injury to one is on injury to all!***

It is notable that there was a sharp increase in police killings before 2009. In those years, Zuma and his supporters campaigned for him to take over as leader of the ANC and the government, with a central focus on the call to "get tough on crime." In April 2008, then-deputy cop minister Susan Shabangu declared to a group of cops at an "anti-crime imbizo" [gathering] in Pretoria: "You must kill the bastards if they threaten you or the community.... I want no warning shots. You have one shot and it must be a kill shot.... There are to be no negotiations with criminals." She was supported by Zuma, and in the years since, police commissioners and numerous government tops have declared that the cops must "shoot to kill."

The government then began "militarising" the police and creating and expanding special forces units like the Berets, who are regularly unleashed to brutalise and harass street vendors and anyone else trying to eke out a desperate existence. Of course, in the eyes of the capitalist rulers and their government ministers, the worst "crime" imaginable is for the working class to "violate public order" by challenging its position as wage slaves of the capitalists. It's no surprise that in the days before 16 August 2012 Susan Shabangu, now minister of mines in Zuma's government, howled along with other Tripartite Alliance tops for the blood of the striking workers in Marikana, whom they denounced as "criminals"!

For a Socialist Federation of Southern Africa

The grisly killing of Macia, an immigrant from Mozambique, has reminded many people of the sadistic cops who in 1998 were filmed using three Mozambican immigrants as training bait to incite police dogs against blacks. While in 1998 it was six white Afrikaner cops who reveled in carrying out that racist atrocity, this time it was a group of black cops. As we have repeatedly argued since 1994, the cops in this neo-apartheid system, whether black or white, are hired thugs of the (still mainly white) bourgeoisie who enforce racist terror against the black toilers and oppressed. This understanding is opposed to the false consciousness of black nationalism, which says that all black people—from black police and mining capitalists like Patrice Motsepe to the rock drill operators working in the mines—share a common interest that stands above class divisions.

When the racist attack on Mozambican immigrants was uncovered in 2000, we described how this and other racist atrocities at the time exposed the fairy tale of the "rainbow nation" ("Racist Terror in the 'New South Africa'," *WV* No. 748, 15 December 2000). We emphasised in that article: "It's either going to be multiracial class struggle or interracial, intertribal bloodletting. There can be no non-racial bourgeois democracy in South Africa. It is only through a working-class social revolution that racial domination can be put to an end." If the masses' frustration does not find expression along *closs* lines, it will continue to fuel every other kind of division as different sections of the oppressed fight and kill each other over a few meagre crumbs from the capitalists.

This warning was confirmed, in the negative, most starkly by the outbreak in May 2008 of the anti-immigrant pogroms that spread across townships throughout the country and took the lives of 62 people. These attacks were encouraged by state repression against immigrants. For example, almost 205,000 Zimbabweans were deported in 2007. During the May 2008 pogroms that followed, the police mostly looked on approvingly or joined in terrorising immigrants. In 2010-11, the state began a campaign to crack down on immigrants, ending the "special dispensation" that had allowed Zimbabweans to stay in the country without documentation. As a result, there were nearly 43,000 deportations to Zimbabwe between October 2011 and October 2012. Many other immigrants are still being held at the Lindela deportation camp in West Rand, where inmates rioted in March 2012 against hellish conditions. State terror is wind in the sails of the reactionary mobs carrying out attacks in the streets, which have been on the rise.

Class struggle provides the basis on which ethnic, national and other divisions within the working class can be overcome and class unity forged against the hourgeoisie's divide-and-rule tactics. An example of this can he seen in De Doorns in the Western Cape. In 2009, some 3,000 mostly Zimbabwean immigrants were forced to flee De Doorns following anti-immigrant attacks. Three years later, De Doorns was at the heart of the wildcat strikes by farmworkers throughout the Western Cape demanding an increase in the minimum wage to R150 ($17) per day. The white farmers and the racist Democratic Alliance provincial government tried to foment divisions between

Laurie Bloomfield

AP

From white-supremacist apartheid to neo-apartheid under ANC, police are deadly enemies of workers and the poor. Left: Cop attack on women demonstrators in Cato Manor near Durban, 1959. Right: Police slaughter of striking Lonmin Platinum miners near Rustenburg, 16 August 2012.

coloured (mixed-race, partly Malay-derived) and Xhosa workers, and between South African and foreign workers. But the workers resisted this, and immigrants from Lesotho and Zimbabwe played a prominent role in the leadership of the strike. Now there are threats by farmers to hire immigrant workers as a way of getting around the increased minimum wage of R105 per day and of fueling anti-immigrant bigotry. It is an urgent task of the workers movement to fight to organise immigrant workers into trade unions, linking this to a fight for ***full citizenship rights*** and against state repression and discrimination of any kind.

The key is to build a revolutionary internationalist leadership which recognises that the interests of the working class are irreconcilable with the capitalist system. A Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party that will act as tribune of the oppressed, fighting against all manifestations of capitalist oppression and opposing all forms of bourgeois nationalism, must be built. The national borders in sub-Saharan Africa, as in many parts of the Third World, are completely artificial. They were imposed by the imperialist colonisers, who fought among each other to carve out spheres of domination, drawing arbitrary borders that would suit this purpose.

Our perspective is for a *socialist federation of Southern Africa*. Then the current domination of the region by South Africa's racist rulers will be replaced by a system in which the relatively advanced South African economy can be put to use on the basis of rational planning and collectivised ownership of the means of production, to raise the living standards of the masses throughout the region. This must be part of fighting to link up with workers revolutions in the imperialist centres and creating an international planned socialist economy, which is necessary to lift Africa out of poverty.

It is from our revolutionary internationalist framework that we address the recent death of 13 South African army (SANDF) troops who were deployed in the Central African Republic (CAR). They were killed when some 200 South African troops were sent packing by insurgents of the Seleka military coalition, who went on to depose the regime of Francois Bozizé that the SANDF was trying to help prop up. In response, there has been an outpouring of chauvinism in the bourgeois media and by the government in South Africa about the "fallen heroes" of the SANDF. Amid this, there has been little note taken of the carnage wreaked on the population of the CAR, one of the world's poorest countries, where it is estimated that more than 200,000 people had been displaced by mid 2012, and up to 30,000 have fled the country since the latest fighting broke out.

Gallo

January 9: Striking black and coloured farm workers from De Doorns rally in Cape Town for higher wages.

Both Bozizé and the insurgents who deposed him are reactionary tin-pot dictators who have appealed to the American and European imperialists for support. For its part, the South African army was deployed in an attempt to demonstrate the Zuma government's reliability in guaranteeing "stability" so that the South African capitalists and their imperialist senior partners could plunder the diamonds and other mineral wealth in the CAR. (The government suffered a black eye with the death of the 13 soldiers and has apparently withdrawn the others at least temporarily.) South African troops are currently stationed in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Sudan as part of African Union (AU) contingents, which act as adjuncts to the United Nations and other imperialist forces.

In September 1998 the South African government launched a military invasion of Lesotho by South African and Botswana troops. While using the pretext of saving the government from the threat of a developing mutiny, the first target of the South Africans was a group of 16 sleeping Lesotho Defence Force members who were killed guarding the Katse Dam away from Maseru (the capital of Lesotho), where the uprising was taking place. The Katse Dam provides fresh water to South Africa's industrial hub of Gauteng Province. Scores of other Lesotho citizens lost their lives as a result of this invasion.

The use of the military abroad is a reflection of how the bourgeois state is used at home to oppress the working class and the poor: Don't forget that the SANDF was also sent to Marikana and surrounding areas to reinforce the police against the striking mineworkers. We say: ***South African, AU troops out of the CAR, DRC and Sudan! UN, French and other imperialists get out!***

The State and Revolution

The National Prosecuting Authority took the step of charging the Daveyton cops caught on video killing Macia with murder, and the judge denied them bail. This is "damage control," designed, like the bogus Farlam commission of inquiry into the Marikana massacre, to let people blow off some steam and to whitewash the capitalist state. Anybody with illusions that justice for the victims of police terror will be granted by the courts and prosecution, which are part of the same bourgeois state, should look at the case of the teacher Andries Tatane. The cops who killed Tatane were caught *on camera* shooting him at pointblank range with rubber bullets, and he died minutes later with those bullets lodged in his heart and lungs. That was April 2011. Now, some two years later, the trial concluded on March 28 with all the cops getting off without even a token slap on the wrist!

This shows yet again that *there is no justice in the bourgeois courts*. No amount of reformist tinkering with the machinery of state repression can change the viciously racist and brutal nature of the neo-apartheid police. V.I. Lenin explained in *The State and Revolution* (1917): "The state is a product and a manifestation of the *irreconcilability* of class antagonisms. The state arises where, when and insofar as class antagonisms objectively *cannot* be reconciled." The state is an instrument for the oppression of one class by another—under capitalism, for the oppression and exploitation of the working class by the bourgeoisie.

As Lenin wrote, the state power "consists of special bodies of armed men having prisons, etc., at their command." There is no way to reform the capitalist state machinery to make it serve the interests of the workers and oppressed. It must be smashed through workers revolution and replaced by a state that can serve the interests of the majority, the dictatorship of the proletariat. In Lenin's words: "Every revolution, by destroying the state apparatus, clearly shows us how the ruling class strives to restore the special bodies of armed men which serve *it*, and how the oppressed class strives to create a new organisation of this kind, capable of serving the exploited instead of the exploiters."

Since the 1990s, the pass laws, Group Areas Act and countless other apartheid laws upholding white minority rule are no more. But the material, social basis of apartheid, which is rooted in the super-exploitation of black labour, remains unshaken. The Tripartite Alliance government administers a neo-apartheid capitalist system. In almost 20 years, nothing has changed in the grinding poverty and exploitation suffered by the overwhelming majority of blacks and other non-whites, and in many ways their conditions have deteriorated. On the other hand, a handful of black elites have enriched themselves by joining in the exploitation of "their own people" and acting as political front men and labour lieutenants for the white Randlords and their imperialist senior partners, who continue to dominate the economy.

The reformist leaders of COSATU and the SACP spout all kinds of anti-Marxist nonsense about the South African state being a "class-contested terrain," etc. This is just an attempt to justify the countless wretched betrayals they have carried out in the service of their alliance with the ANC. The Tripartite Alliance is a nationalist

continued on page 9

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150 Years Since the Emancipation Proclamation

Henry P. Moore

G P.A. Healy

Top: Slaves of Confederate general Thomas Drayton on Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, being freed by Union forces, late 1861 or early 1862. Above: Painting of President Lincoln meeting with (left to right) Generals Sherman and Grant and Rear Admiral Porter, March 1865.

Spartacist Forum

PART TWO

Part One of this article, which concludes here, appeared in WV *No. 1021 (5 April).*

A hundred days elapsed between the announcement of the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation on September 22, 1862, and when it was to take effect on January 1, 1863. Did the Army support the Emancipation Proclamation? A resounding "yes." The old vets in particular wanted to strike at the heart of the rebellion. And many in the North greeted it heartily, such as the abolitionists, the Radicals. And Northern public opinion followed the Army's. Northerners were getting radicalized en masse as well.

The Emancipation Proclamation was an unprecedented assertion of presidential and federal power, altering forever the constitutional balance of powers. Congress had challenged Lincoln's authority to control war policy and military appointments, but now, with the stroke of a pen, $3.5 billion worth of property was legally annihilated. In purely economic terms it approaches Henry VIII's seizure of church properties during the Reformation and the Bolsheviks' nationalization of the factories and farms after the Russian Revolution. The preliminary emancipation also stated of the freed slaves that the government "will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom."

Finish the Civil War!

Oh, the howls of protest! Echoing the concerns of the rebels, the London *Times* wrote that this was an incitement to servile insurrection. Well, the British ruling class was maybe a little paranoid. They had just finished putting down the 1857 Sepoy mutiny, the massive rebellion across the Indian subcontinent sparked by the Sepoys, who were the Indian soldiers in service to the British military. The abolitionist Senator Charles Sumner's nice riposte to this was that if servile insurrection happens, they're only getting what they deserve. But that phrase was taken out and replaced with an admonition to the freedmen "to abstain from all violence unless in necessary self defense."

Police attack workers meeting in London's Hyde Park, 1862. Karl Marx (Inset) helped organize solidarity by English workers with Union war against slaveholders.

Progress (inset); Dietz Verlag Berlin

This was still quite radical. That a slave could never raise his hand against the master was fundamental to slavery. And then the preliminary emancipation stated that blacks "will be received into the armed service of the U.S." The abolitionists had been fighting for that since the beginning of the war. By extending the right to join in common defense through the use of federal power, it fundamentally altered the civil status of blacks in the North as well as the South, setting a precedent and stimulating a political movement for equal citizenship.

The preliminary decrèe had a call for continued colonization efforts. But by January 1, 1863, when he signed the Emancipation Proclamation, Lincoln changed his mind. The final proclamation was silent about colonization, and Lincoln would never again mention it in public.

The Emancipation Proclamation was a pledge, a promise. It only freed slaves in areas that were not yet controlled by Union armies, true enough. But in that sense it was like the Declaration of Independence in 1776, which didn't make any of the colonies free—it took a victorious war to free the colonies from British rule. The Emancipation Proclamation bound the defense of the Union to the destruction of slavery. Given the rebel determination to defend slavery, the war could not be prosecuted as anything but a war of subjugation. Once the power of the government was enlisted on the side of freedom in one place, it couldn't be restricted in another. Over three million slaves were affected by the Emancipation Proclamation; 830,000 were exempted, but nothing anywhere was untouched. Slaves in the exempted areas voted with their feet as well.

The Emancipation Proclamation did not sound like much; it was a pretty dry document. The abolitionists were disappointed because the proclamation was only issued on account of military necessity; they wanted some high-sounding phrases about advancing the cause of freedom. It was only because Salmon Chase said he should put something in there that Lincoln actually put in a sentence saying that it was sincerely believed to be an act of justice. Nevertheless, as Karl Marx wrote in *Comments on the North American Events* (October 1862): "The manifesto abolishing slavery, is the most important document in American history since the establishment of the Union, tantamount to the tearing up of the old American constitution." The only way the war could end was by the outright victory of one side over the other, and the victory of the North meant a revolutionary transformation of American society.

Since the beginning of the war there was a threat that Britain and France would enter on the side of the South. But once emancipation was proclaimed, Britain especially was unable to intervene. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels and others organized support for the Union among workers in Britain, then the most powerful capitalist country in the world. They were quite successful, too, despite the desperate attempts of the ruling class to win the workers to the side of the slavocracy. British textile workers in particular exercised militant and heroic solidarity with their white and black brothers and sisters across the Atlantic. Impoverished to begin with, many endured years of unemployment due in part to the war. But they never wavered. Marx wrote:

> "The English working class has won immortal historical honour for itself by thwarting the repeated attempts of the ruling classes to intervene on behalf of the American slaveholders by its enthusiastic mass meetings, even though the prolongation of the American Civil War

subjects a million English workers to the most fearful sufferings and privations."

—Proclamation on Poland by the German Workers' Educational Society in London (October 1863)

Who Freed the Slaves?

Lincoln both led and responded to a transformation in public sentiment. He was later quoted as saying, "It is my conviction that, had the proclamation been issued even six months earlier than it was, public sentiment would not have sustained it." The same was true with enlisting black men. He said, "The step taken sooner could not, in my judgment, have been carried out." So was Lincoln too slow in proclaiming emancipation, turning the Civil War into an abolition war? Well, fast and slow are relative terms. Perhaps he agonized too long on the border states. Perhaps he fretted too long about the Northern Democrats. But by the standards of the American people as a whole, Lincoln's pace was radical and swift.

The bulk of the Northern populace, and particularly white soldiers, came to see the need to fight for black freedom. The soldiers came to that understanding much sooner. That's not to say that the Army was free from prejudice, far from it. But especially once blacks proved themselves in battle, they earned the respect of their white comrades-in-arms.

Of course, there was opposition to the Emancipation Proclamation from the Democrats, the most rabid of whom were known as Copperheads, after the poisonous snake. The antiwar Democrats

Illustrated London News

1863: Anti-draft riots in New York City became a racist pogrom.

escalated racist hysteria among workers and immigrants, with Democratic politicians and newspapers declaring that the freed slaves would steal the jobs of white workers. We've heard that before, haven't we? I mean, the ruling class is whipping up that same hysteria over immigrant workers today. Then in 1863 the anti-draft riots in New York City turned into a racist pogrom. In 1864, during a period of defeat and demoralization in the North in the lead-up to the elections, the Democrats fomented racist opposition to emancipation. They actually coined the word miscegenation and published material replete with lurid racist cartoons. McClellan was the Democrats' presidential candidate in 1864.

Starting in the 1960s and 1970s, many in the black nationalist movement and the New Left questioned Abraham Lincoln's role: Did he free the slaves? The short answer is yes, because without a Civil War victory there would be no emancipation. And Lincoln was the primary architect of that victory. Lincoln has also been slandered as a racist by, for example, the historian Lerone Bennett and the so-called Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP). The RCP has a sordid history in the fight against black oppression anyway, most notoriously in Boston during the 1974 busing crisis when they sided with white racists against the fight for integration. Lincoln was not a racist—the racists were the ones Lincoln was fighting against.

And then there is the Spark organization. They're agnostic on the Civil War. They say it was a civil war in the South against Yankee capitalist oppression and they have no problem with the Confederate flag. Progressive Labor (PL), similarly, ignores the centrality of the fight against slavery. Even worse, PL lauds the New York City draft riots without mentioning slavery.

F.O.C. Darley

Engraving depicts General Sherman's 1864 march to the sea, which cut the heart out of Confederacy.

They all imbibe the racist myth, born out of the defeat of Reconstruction and perpetuated by generations of historians and defenders of the Confederacy, that the Civil War was ***not*** about slavery. Lincoln changed and the aims of the war changed. The Abraham Lincoln who said he was against "remorseless revolutionary struggle" in 1861 is not the same Lincoln who, at his second inaugural in 1865, said:

> "Fondly do we hope—fervently do we pray—that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bond-man's 250 years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash, shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said 3,000 years ago, so still it must be said 'the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether'."

But we are not uncritical of Lincoln. I would like to quote Frederick Douglass from a speech he delivered in April 1876 at the dedication of the freedmen's memorial to Abraham Lincoln in Washington, D.C. You had all the luminaries of the Republican Party there: President Ulysses S. Grant, Salmon Chase, who was at this point chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. And Frederick Douglass says:

> "Abraham Lincoln was not, in the fullest sense of the word, either our man or our model. In his interests, in his associations, in his habits of thought, and in his prejudices, he was a white man....
> "Abraham Lincoln saved for you a country, he delivered us from a bondage, according to Jefferson, one hour of which was worse than ages of the oppression your fathers rose in rebellion to oppose....
> "Abraham Lincoln was at the head of a great movement, and was in living and earnest sympathy with that movement, which, in the nature of things, must go on until slavery should be utterly and forever abolished in the United States."
>
> *—The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass*, Vol. 4

The Role of Black Troops

A key provision of the Emancipation Proclamation was the arming of the slaves. Black troops played a critical role in the Union victory. With the recruitment of regiments of former slaves against their former masters, it was clear that a revolution was in progress. The Black Spartacus was on the march! It was very demoralizing to the slaveholders.

But it was a question: Would the former slaves fight? Would they be good soldiers? Many doubted that after the degradation of slavery blacks could be good soldiers and not just humble, subservient, oppressed people. But the heroic Massachusetts 54th Regiment decisively settled that question when they charged into the guns of Fort Wagner, South Carolina, incurring massive casualties. Black soldiers became some of the best fighters for the Union, fighting for freedom, fighting for the freedom of their families, fighting with nooses around their necks. They were sent back into slavery if they were captured and their white officers faced execution if they were captured.

If black soldiers surrendered, the Confederates often massacred them. One of the worst examples was at Fort Pillow, Tennessee, a federal garrison composed of black regiments and white regiments. When the garrison surrendered after being attacked by the cavalry of Nathan Bedford Forrest, scores of black soldiers were massacred. Forrest was a slave trader before the war, a dealer in convict labor after the war, and he was a founder of the KKK. But after the massacre, black soldiers seldom surrendered. When they went into battle, they would fight like hellcats, with a battle cry on their lips: "Remember Fort Pillow!"

The 54th was a great black regiment. But there were not a whole lot of blacks in the North where the 54th was recruited. So Lincoln and Secretary of War Stanton sent Adjutant General Lorenzo Thomas to the Mississippi Valley to recruit black soldiers and dispel the opposition of white soldiers. I like to use Lorenzo Thomas as an example of how people change during a revolution. Thomas was a 60-year-old paper-pusher, a bureaucrat in Washington, D.C., for years and years. He had not seen the field of battle for ages. But he got sent to the Mississippi Valley to recruit black soldiers, and he did it. He would go from camp to camp and make speeches to the white soldiers. What he would say to them about the black people coming into the lines was to "receive them kindly and cordially. They are to be encouraged to come to us; they are to be received with open arms; they are to be fed and clothed; they are to be armed." He was instrumental in recruiting 100,000 black soldiers. Two hundred thousand black soldiers were recruited, all told.

Also illustrative of the contradictions of this bourgeois revolution is William Tecumseh Sherman, who was a stone racist. He sabotaged the effort to recruit black troops to the point of insubordination, all the while dealing some of the deadliest military blows to the Confederacy. He refused to allow the recruitment of black troops near his armies because he wanted blacks only as laborers. Lincoln tolerated this because Sherman could win battles. With his march to the sea and then up through South Carolina, Sherman did more than any other Union general to burn the heart out of slavery. Sherman epitomized the hard war that Lincoln and Grant had pushed.

It's not about the ideas in people's heads but what they do. As materialists, we understand that social being determines social consciousness—that is, most people can only transcend their own history to a limited degree. So banish moralism and focus on the act! I'm sure the modern-day fans of the Confederacy don't care very much what Sherman thought. But they sure can't forget what he did!

The Dawn of Reconstruction

Bourgeois mythology would have it that it was a straight shot from the Emancipation Proclamation to Martin Luther King and the civil rights movement to Obama. No! The *Chicago Tribune* (3 February) had a little piece on the Emancipation Proclamation headlined: "Lincoln's Proclamation Inspired Slaves to Leave Plantations, Embrace Hope." Embrace hope? Please! Where have we heard that before? Obama's campaign literature, of course. It conjures up images of tear-stained black faces turning their eyes to the sky, when the reality was war and revolution!

At the end of the war, emancipated slaves, many with guns in their hands, were at the very center of the Second American Revolution, pushing ahead, without organization, toward the redistribution of land and toward political liberty. These measures necessitated turning the entire structure of the old South upside down. The confiscation of the land owned by the big proprietors and its partition and distribution among the landless laborers meant an agrarian revolution. The triumphant capitalists wanted to perpetuate their grip upon the national government, increase their control over industry and agriculture and grab natural resources. In order to promote this program, their political representatives had to maneuver with other forces in the country.

What started out at the close of the Civil War as an alliance between the Northern capitalists and the black and white plebeians of the South against the landed aristocracy terminated in 1876 with a union between the capitalist magnates and the planters against the Southern masses, particularly the black freedmen. In 1865, aside from the military and the Freedmen's Bureau, which had been established by the federal government, there was no government in the South. Everything was up in the air. The 13th Amendment was on the books, but little else was settled.

There were several hundred thousand black people either in the Army or recently demobilized. They felt it was time to cash in on what was due them. Perhaps the most idealized version of

continued on page 8

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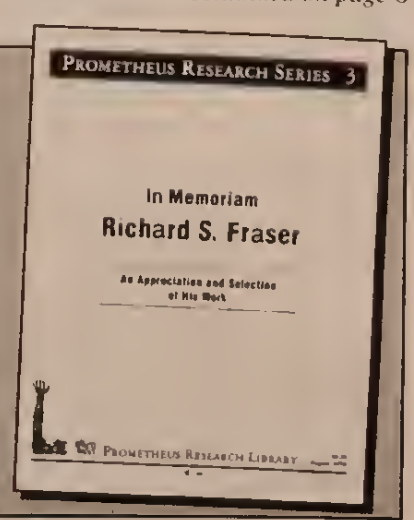

150 Years...

(continued from page 7)

what black people thought Reconstruction was supposed to turn into was "40 acres and a mule." This comes from Sherman's Special Order No. 15, which he issued in Savannah in 1865, right after he finished his march through Georgia. That order gave 40 acres of abandoned land and also unneeded old Army mules to newly freed black families.

The way this happened is that Secretary of War Stanton had come down to visit Sherman's army in Savannah. He and Sherman met with black preachers from the area. Sherman was very well known for his hot temper. I can see him just seething, having to sit down with all these black preachers and talk with them man to man. But out of that meeting came the Special Orders. This relieved Sherman of the problem of what to do with the thousands of former slaves who had followed in his train. Then Stanton ordered Sherman to add a black regiment to his army, which he did, except that regiment was abused all the way from Georgia up through South Carolina. I told you that Sherman was hardly a racial egalitarian. Yet and still, despite his subjective beliefs, Sherman was caught up in a revolution. And he wrote that Order, which put land into the hands of black freedmen and helped to inspire the fight for black freedom.

Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper

Thomas Nast

Above: Under Radical Reconstruction, Virginia Constitutional Convention of 1867-68 included two dozen black delegates, provided universal male suffrage. Right: 1876 drawing depicts racist terror by paramilitary White League aimed at reversing gains made by black freedmen.

Radical Reconstruction

In the summer of 1865, the redistribution of abandoned and confiscated land was Freedmen's Bureau policy, supported by the military. But it was very quickly turned around. Many Southern states passed Black Codes. This was slavery in everything but name—vagrancy laws, forced apprenticeships, forced contracts—to regulate and control black labor. The precedent for Black Codes was set in the North where, despite the abolition of slavery prior to the Civil War, there were many legal proscriptions against black people. But the Black Codes were not rigorously or uniformly enforced, unlike the Jim Crow laws that came later. Things were still volatile and were so much up in the air, with lots of victorious black soldiers with guns roaming around.

Let me note the importance of the right to bear arms, and how important that has always been for the defense of black rights. The right of self-defense was key. We say, "Gun control kills blacks." Obama and a whole section of the ruling class are bemoaning gun violence. But the whole history of gun control in this country is the story of the ruling class trying to disarm the population, particularly in periods of social struggle. Hence the reactionary Black Codes passed in various Southern states tried to outlaw the possession of firearms by black people. In response, the Freedmen's Bureau widely distributed circulars that read in part: "All men, without distinction of color, have the right to keep and bear arms to defend their homes, families or themselves."

Every gain that black people have made was a battle. In a letter to Lincoln's successor, Andrew Johnson, on behalf of the First International, Marx wrote: "Yours, Sir, has become the task to uproot by the law what has been felled by the sword, to preside over the arduous work of political reconstruction and social regeneration." But Johnson did exactly the opposite. He tried to restore the old social order in everything but name. Johnson started amnestying former slaveowners and weeded radicals out of the Freedmen's Bureau. Johnson had an all-consuming hatred of black people. He was a former slaveowner with the mentality of poor white trash, a racist appeaser of remnants of the slavocracy. Johnson was really fearful of a link-up of black and white poor. The idea of real social and political equality repelled him. Johnson's amnesty proclamations were an abrogation of Sherman's Field Order No. 15. Forty thousand freedmen were deprived of 485,000 acres of land.

The hallmark of any revolution is the independent mobilization of the masses in defense of their rights and aspirations. That occurred all over the South, with committees, councils and armed self-defense groups springing up. Could black people, arms in hand, have seized the land? In some cases they did. But they were mostly forced off the land. Thaddeus Stevens, probably the most consistent American Jacobin, recognized that land was the key. By being landholders, black freedmen would have an economic basis to defend their rights instead of being beholden to the landlords. Most others, including Frederick Douglass, focused more on the right to vote.

The bourgeoisie was horrified by the thought of confiscation. The free-soil ideology meant that through thrift and hard work you could own a little shop or a farm. As if 250 years of unrequited toil didn't count. The bourgeoisie was quite class-conscious. It paid close attention to the restive working class in Europe, where, in 1871, the French proletariat seized power in Paris and held it for some months—the Paris Commune. The American bourgeoisie recoiled from that. The *New York Times*, then as now a mouthpiece for that class, wrote: "An attempt to justify the confiscation of Southern land under the pretense of doing justice to the freedmen, strikes at the root of all property rights in both sections. It concerns Massachusetts quite as much as Mississippi."

During Johnson's presidency, blacks were beaten and shot down by the hundreds. Black people were no longer anybody's property, so life was cheap. The slaughter of black and white Republicans led directly to military Reconstruction. Many in the North started to be alarmed. They had just finished a brutal civil war and did not want the slaveholders back in power. There was a polarization. The moderates were driven into the arms of the Radicals. The *Chicago Tribune*, hardly known today as a radical journal, wrote that the North would convert Mississippi "into a frog pond" before allowing slavery to be reestablished.

The Radicals got the majority of support in Congress and began to set the tone of Reconstruction. The South was placed under military control by Congress. As General-in-Chief, U.S. Grant appointed the generals running each district. Grant was allied with the Radicals on many issues and was generally sympathetic to the struggles of black people, even if like Lincoln he did not personally believe in social equality. During his presidency, starting in 1868, his policy was a real mixed bag.

It took a battle to preserve black rights. There were the Freedmen's Bureau, the Union Leagues, black militias. But federal troops were the key. Reconstruction could not have succeeded as much as it did absent even a halfhearted commitment to smash and crush forces of reaction by the federal government. Congress wanted to readmit the former Confederate states to the Union. But the only way these states could be admitted was on the Union's terms. And the only way those terms would be met was if black people got the vote. Under military Reconstruction, with the passage of the Reconstruction Acts and the 14th Amendment, blacks were given the vote and elected to state constitutional conventions and Reconstruction governments.

Once black people gained the franchise, the Republicans dominated Reconstruction governments across the South. The majority of officeholders were white with a significant minority of blacks, based on the support of blacks and some poor whites. Black Republicans became the major focus for political, social and economic justice in the South. They agitated for more political rights, more schools, more hospitals, more land, more debtors' relief—things that benefitted the vast majority of Southern labor, black and white. The passage of the 15th Amendment in 1870 codified the right to vote, all across the North as well as the South.

Racist Reaction

But Northern capitalists had other interests: profit. They were willing to invest in the capital-starved South, but when those profits were threatened by agitation and unrest, they pulled the plug. Reconstruction governments and black people were always under attack by the KKK and similar groups that wanted social and economic control of the black population. Black schools were particularly a target, and scores went up in flames. Intimidation and murder were rampant. Congress adopted all sorts of paper measures protecting blacks, including the 14th Amendment that guarantees "equal protection of the laws." But the government betrayed the promise of black liberation in the Compromise of 1877, when almost all the remaining Union troops were withdrawn from the South. Reconstruction

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was defeated by blood and fire.

The post-Reconstruction period, called Redemption by the racists, was marked by a political counterrevolution aimed at black people and enforced by racist terrorists. A new system of racist exploitation was established by restricting the rights of freedmen across the board. In 1896, the Supreme Court codified "separate but equal" segregation as the law of the land in *Plessy v. Ferguson*. Segregation took the place of chattel slavery as the main prop of the new racist order. This rigid system of legally enforced racial segregation, called Jim Crow, was imposed and maintained by police-state repression and the terror of the KKK which, in the words of Civil War historian James McPherson, "became in effect armed auxiliaries of the Democratic party." It took a long and often bloody struggle for the civil rights movement 80 years later to restore some of the rights black people won during the Civil War and Reconstruction.

With the triumph of capitalism across the continent also came the creation of the class destined to become the gravediggers of that same system, the working class. Once freed from the retarding effects of the slavery question, the labor movement took off with agitation for the eight-hour day, agitation for unions. This culminated in the Great Rail Strike of 1877, which was brutally suppressed by the Army that was no longer defending black people in the South. However, concomitant with the entrance of the American bourgeoisie onto the world stage as an imperialist power in the 1890s, there developed a layer of hardcore trade-union bureaucrats bought off by the spoils of imperialism and sharing the values of the ruling class. They imported and continued to import this retrograde consciousness into the working class.

Now I would like to acknowledge the debt we owe to Dick Fraser, a leading member of the Socialist Workers Party in the 1940s and '50s, when it was still a revolutionary organization. Fraser developed a trenchant Marxist analysis of slavery, the Civil War and Reconstruction, of the origins of the racist system in this country and the material basis for black oppression. Fraser wrote: "After the Civil War and Reconstruction destroyed the old slave owning class, northern capital, from economic and political motives, betrayed its promises and created a revised, capitalist form of race relations, based upon many of the traditions and social relations of slavery" ("Revolutionary Integration: the Dialectics of Black Liberation," *Revolutionary Age*, Vol. 1, No. 1 [1968]).

Fraser took as a starting point the lessons he had learned from studies of the 1917 Russian Revolution, particularly Bolshevik Party policies on the many nationalities in Russia. And that is the point on which I want to conclude—the Bolshevik Revolution. The Bolsheviks united the struggles of all the oppressed behind the banner of the working class, and that is what we must do. Today, we take up struggles for immigrant rights, for women's rights, and we fight to replace the trade-union misleaders with a militant, class-struggle leadership.

WV Photo

Washington Post

Left: Spartacist supporter dressed in Union Army uniform tears down Confederate flag of slavery at San Francisco Civic Center, April 1984. Right: Labor/black mobilization organized by Spartacist League stopped Klan from marching in Washington, D.C., November 1982.

We wrote in one of our basic documents, "Black and Red," in 1967:

> "Only common struggle for common aims can unite the working class and overcome the lifelong racial prejudices of American workers. A victory of the socialist revolution in this country will be achieved through the united struggle of black and white workers under the leadership of the revolutionary vanguard party. In the course of this struggle, unbreakable bonds will be forged between the two sections of the working class. The success of this struggle will place the Negro people in a position to insure at last the end of slavery, racism and super-exploitation."

The forcible segregation of black people, integral to American capitalism, has been resisted by the black masses whenever a perceived possibility for such struggle has been felt. The entire history of mass black struggle—from the abolitionists through the Civil War and Radical Reconstruction to the civil rights movement—has been in the direction of integration, not separation.

While combating every manifestation of racist oppression, fighting in particular to mobilize the social power of the multiracial labor movement, we underline that full equality for the black masses requires that the working class rip the economy out of the hands of the racist capitalist rulers and reorganize it on a socialist basis. Only then will it be possible to eliminate the material roots of black oppression through the full integration of black people into an egalitarian socialist society based on a collective economy with quality jobs, housing, health care and education for all. You see, it was the Russian working class led by the Bolsheviks who carried out the first and thus far only successful socialist revolution. We aim to build a vanguard party that will fight for the next one.

In the midst of the Second American Revolution, Lincoln said in the Gettysburg Address, "It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced." Well, there is still a lot of unfinished work. Join us in the fight for a Third American Revolution. Join us in the fight to build a revolutionary party. Finish the Civil War—For black liberation through socialist revolution! ■

South Africa...

(continued from page 5)

popular front through which the working-class base of COSATU and the SACP are subordinated to their own exploiters, while the leaders of those organisations have joined the capitalist government, thereby taking responsibility for administering the racist capitalist system.

While SACP leader Blade Nzimande currently serves as minister of higher education in the Zuma government which oversaw the Marikana massacre, earlier SACP government ministers included Charles Nqakula as minister of the cops and Ronnie Kasrils as spy minister, both under the Thabo Mbeki government. COSATU includes among its affiliates the Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union (POPCRU), while other COSATU affiliates also organise security guards and police and the SACP welcomes cops as "comrades" in its own organisation. This is suicidal fraternisation with the capitalist exploiters' shock troops, the deadly enemies of the working class.

In the fight against police terror, class-conscious militants must demand: ***Cops, prison guards, security guards out of the unions!*** This is part of the struggle for the political and organisational independence of the working class from the bourgeoisie, its state and its parties. We seek to break the Tripartite Alliance along class lines, winning pro-communist militants from COSATU and the SACP to forging the Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party that can lead a revolutionary struggle against this rotten system. A new leadership of the unions, based on a programme of class struggle, must come to the fore in the course of building the revolutionary party.

The sellout SACP and COSATU tops are aided and abetted by pseudo-socialist outfits like the Democratic Socialist Movement (DSM), Keep Left! and the Workers International Vanguard Party (WIVP), all of which push the grotesque reformist lie that the cops are fellow workers. The DSM has recently been trying to capitalise on the prominence it gained through the mineworkers strike wave by forming a "new mass workers party," the Workers and Socialist Party (WASP). At a meeting to launch WASP in Pretoria on March 21, the DSM welcomed a "union" of private security guards and invited them to address the crowd as one of the organisations (another was the WIVP) supporting the formation of WASP!

Despite the SACP's talk about the "national democratic revolution," South Africa never had a revolution of any sort. The much-vaunted "most democratic constitution in the world" was the outcome of a ***negotiated settlement*** between the white rulers and the ANC/Alliance tops, the latter of whom betrayed the struggle for black freedom in order to ensure a "smooth transition," i.e., to avoid upsetting the capitalist profit machine. As a result, and with the explosive social contradictions of this society, the democratic rights that were granted have always been reversible and bourgeois parliamentary democracy highly unstable. We are witnessing this today, as the social contradictions begin to explode and protests by the working class and other oppressed layers are met with increasingly brutal, deadly state repression.

The workers and the oppressed do not need reformist and liberal sermonising and hand-wringing about the rights supposedly guaranteed by the bourgeois constitution. They need a leadership that points clearly to the class interests behind the machinery of state terror, and to the revolutionary struggle needed to put an end to grinding immiseration and repression. The only salvation is a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party fighting for a black-centred workers government and new October Revolutions all over the world. ■

New York...

(continued from page 12)

continue unabated, as does the coast-to-coast mass incarceration of those the racist rulers consider a "surplus" population.

The cops and courts work together as part of the bourgeois state apparatus that represses the working class and the ghetto and barrio poor in order to maintain capitalist rule and profits. This elementary Marxist understanding is obscured by the reformist leftists and liberals who peddle fantasies of police behavior modification. Thus an article on the International Socialist Organization's SocialistWorker.org Web site (26 March), titled "Stop-and-Frisk on Trial," breathlessly reports that the Manhattan trial "could possibly set legal precedent in regards to racial profiling." What the cops think about such "precedent" was expressed a few decades ago by the notorious Frank Rizzo, who told a court magistrate when he was chief of the Philadelphia police, "All right, you're the boss in here, but we're the boss on the street."

In "End Stop and Frisk Now!" *Socialist Alternative* (June 2012) raised the time-worn reformist call to "place law enforcement and public safety under democratic community control." The working class and the oppressed will never "control" the police, who are the instruments of the capitalist class that rules this society. The Socialist Alternative outfit tramples on this truth by portraying the cops, whose job is to suppress class and social struggle, as part of the working class.

This suicidal notion is also sold by the pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucracy. When NYC's Transport Workers Union Local 100 defied the New York state Taylor Law and went on strike in December 2005, then-president of Local 100, Roger Toussaint, invited Patrolmen's Benevolent Association president Patrick Lynch to speak on the union platform. The cops showed their true colors by enforcing a court injunction against the strike, leading to the arrest of Toussaint himself. The multiracial membership of Local 100 is no stranger to stop-and-frisk and other facets of police terror. The father of Sean Bell, a young black man who was killed in a firestorm of cop bullets in 2006 on the night before his wedding, is a TWU retiree.

Unions like the TWU have enormous potential social power that could be unleashed in defense not only of its own members but of the ghetto and barrio masses. But that potential is sapped by the loyalty of the union officialdom to the capitalist profit system and the state power that enforces it, particularly in its Democratic Party face. Current Local 100 officials helped build a rally in March for greater gun control, denouncing "gun violence." This campaign gives credence to one of the cops' major pretexts for stop-and-frisk harassment—purported gun possession—while also reinforcing the notion that the capitalist state must have a monopoly on weapons. In the face of the drive to strengthen gun control following the December killings in Newtown, Connecticut, we stress the importance for working people to defend the population's right to bear arms. We fight as well to decriminalize drugs as a necessary part of the struggle against the racist "war on drugs."

Stop-and-frisk is no aberration but a particularly glaring expression of the systematic, organized violence that defines the capitalist state. The working class needs a leadership that understands that this machinery of racist capitalist rule cannot be reformed to serve the interests of the workers, minorities and the poor but must be smashed through proletarian revolution. The Spartacist League is dedicated to building the revolutionary workers party that is the necessary instrument to lead the exploited and oppressed in the fight for workers rule. ■

Cyprus...

(continued from page 1)

has been prevented so far only because they were closed for nearly two weeks and then reopened with limits on money taken out of the banks and the country. Additionally, the Troika agreed to limit the tax to deposits over 100,000 euros.

These events stoked fears that the euro was no longer a stable currency, causing it to drop in value against the U.S. dollar. After the Troika tried to pin the blame on Cypriot officials for proposing a tax on all depositors, Dutch Finance Minister Jeroen Dijsselhloem, head of the "Eurogroup" of euro zone finance ministers, told the press that taxing depositors would be the model for any future bank bailouts. Stocks tumbled in response to his comments, forcing him to backtrack somewhat. Troika officials have since tried to contain fears by insisting that Cyprus is a "unique case."

That events in a place representing 0.2 percent of the euro zone economies could rock the whole EU is an indication of the profoundly unstable nature of this alliance of competing capitalist states. Sections of the bourgeoisie in Europe and internationally are fearful that applying the demands placed upon Cyprus to Italy, Spain or Slovenia could lead to a major economic meltdown.

Blaming southern Europeans and rich Russians for the EU's crisis is a convenient way of deflecting responsibility from the German and other imperialist bourgeoisies, whose banks inundated the currently failing economies with loans and are threatened with insolvencies if the debtors fail to pay. Although a bailout of banks in the Republic of Cyprus would be mere pocket change, the German bourgeoisie has evidently decided to use this opportunity to send a loud message that they will no longer bear the cost of bailing out countries on the verge of bankruptcy. With national elections coming up later this year, getting tough on Europe's debtor nations plays well politically for both Angela Merkel's Christian Democratic Union/Free Democratic Party ruling coalition and for her opponents—the reformist Social Democratic Party and the petty-bourgeois Greens.

Imperialist Domination and National Rivalries

The modern history of Cyprus is one of subordination to rapacious imperialist powers and rivalry between capitalist Greece and Turkey for control of the island. For over 80 years Cyprus was subject to bloody British colonial rule, the legacy of which was profound and violent communal divisions between the Turkish and Greek Cypriot populations. In 1974, the U.S.-backed Greek military junta attempted to incorporate Cyprus into Greece by orchestrating a coup on the island by right-wing officers, prompting an invasion by Turkish troops. The Turkish and Greek Cypriot communities were then brutally driven apart and the island divided into two states—the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and the Republic of Cyprus in the south.

The island's strategic position in the eastern Mediterranean has long placed it at the juncture of the interests of several great and not-so-great powers. To this day, Cyprus continues to be occupied by Greek troops in the south, Turkish troops in the north, UN troops in a "buffer zone" and British troops on two bases. As staunch opponents of the Greek nationalism and anti-Turkish chauvinism constantly whipped up by the Greek bourgeoisie over Cyprus, the Trotskyist Group of Greece demands the immediate withdrawal of all Greek troops from Cyprus. We also demand the immediate withdrawal of all Turkish, UN and British troops and bases.

With a population of less than a million people, the Republic of Cyprus built up its economy around banking and tourism following partition. It was in the context of UN-brokered negotiations over the reunification of the island that the Republic of Cyprus was admitted to the EU in 2004 and adopted the euro as its currency in 2008. Many Greek Cypriots saw membership in the EU as giving them the upper hand over Turkey and Turkish Cypriots in the reunification negotiations. But within five years of adopting the euro, the Republic of Cyprus' major banks faced collapse as a result of the financial crisis that has engulfed the EU. So it is no surprise that thousands have rallied in the Republic demanding "Troika Out!" and that a reported two out of three Greek Cypriots now want out of the euro zone.

After a futile attempt to get alternative funding from Russia, the capitalist rulers of the Republic of Cyprus ended up submitting to the EU's revised demands, with the right-wing government of Nicos Anastasiades of the Democratic Rally presenting this deal as much better than the initial round of extortion. Since then, the creditors have doubled their demand for money from the Republic to 13 billion euros to qualify for a 10-billion-euro bailout.

Meanwhile, brutal austerity is planned for workers and the poor, and pensioners and a section of the sizable petty-bourgeoisie face ruin. Particularly vulnerable are immigrant workers—some 100,000 East European, Asian and Near Eastern immigrants were counted in 2011. The Cypriot brethren of the Greek fascist Golden Dawn have been scapegoating immigrants, and violent attacks are on the rise. The London *Independent* (31 March) reported "a Molotov cocktail thrown at a family home near Limassol; a Bulgarian woman attacked in her house; another fire-bombing at an office of the Kurdish party." These attacks underscore the need for the workers movement to fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants and to demand no deportations.

Although Turkey is not impacted by the bailout deal and is, relatively speaking, in good financial shape, thousands of workers from the much poorer Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus who have toiled in the south in recent years are also suffering the effects of this economic crisis. The imperialists have long had a hand in starving the working people in the north of Cyprus—its government, which is recognized only by Turkey, has faced decades of international restrictions on trade and travel. These include a 30-year trade embargo by the EU and its predecessors, which was only eased when a large majority of Turkish Cypriots voted in favor of a UN referendum for reunification in 2004. (The plan was overwhelmingly rejected in the south.) This shows that imperialist blackmail has long been practiced on ***both*** sides of the island.

For a Workers Europe!

The latest round of pillaging of a small, dependent country confirms yet again that the EU is an imperialist trade bloc, dominated by the German and French capitalists, which seeks to increase the exploitation of the working class in Europe while trying to gain advantage over its imperialist rivals in the U.S. and Japan. As the plummeting conditions of life for working people in Greece, Portugal, Spain and Ireland have shown, all the talk of European "convergence" had nothing to do with bringing poorer countries up to the level of the wealthier nations but was about creating "flexible labor markets," i.e., low-paid workforces with no protections. A case in point is Greece, where labor costs have dropped 20 percent in the last three years and official unemployment has skyrocketed to more than 27 percent.

The International Communist League has consistently opposed the EU and its predecessors. The only way forward for working people is to put an end to the "boom and bust" crises of capitalism through socialist revolution—for the expropriation of capitalist industry and banks and for an internationally planned economy that will overcome the limits of the reactionary bourgeois nation-state. We say: ***Down with the EU! For a Socialist United States of Europe!***

The ICL recognized from the beginning that the euro would be an instrument of the imperialist EU, and we opposed its introduction. German imperialism has made huge profits by driving down the wages of workers in Germany and through the introduction of the euro, which has helped keep its industrial exports cheap throughout the euro zone. However, the weaker euro zone countries that have run trade deficits and borrowed heavily do not have the usual capitalist mechanism of devaluing their currency to make their economies more competitive. In reality, the euro has never been viable. A common currency necessitates a common state. The snowballing divergent interests of the member countries threaten to tear apart the euro zone and the EU while consigning the euro to the albums of coin collectors.

The crisis as a whole is rooted in the giant game of speculation and financial swindles that is an integral component of the domination of international finance capital. As Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin explained in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916): "Although commodity production still 'reigns' and continues to be regarded as the basis of economic life, it has in reality been undermined and the bulk of the profits go to the 'geniuses' of financial manipulation." Banks in the Republic of Cyprus lost billions when they wrongly guessed that investing in high-yield Greek government bonds would pay off. The same imperialist masters of the EU who gave these banks cheap credit to buy up the bonds later forced bondholders to take a 75 percent "haircut" in order to prevent a Greek default. Now the imperialists demand their pound of flesh, overwhelmingly from the working people.

Bourgeois Hypocrisy and Reformist Schemes

The imperialists have added a new twist to their propaganda campaign aimed at covering up their responsibility for the Cyprus crisis: Rich Russians have been added to the list of "lazy" southern Europeans and immigrants as the supposed villains. Actually, the fabulously rich, including the gangsters who looted state property in Russia in the aftermath of the 1991-92 destruction of the USSR, got their money out before the bank doors slammed shut. Behind the sensational stories of Russian oligarchs piling up "hot money" in Cyprus is the supreme hypocrisy of the European bourgeoisies, who have long availed themselves of offshore havens such as Switzerland, Luxembourg and the British Virgin Islands, to name but a few. A recent leak has unsurprisingly revealed that German banks make use of tax havens, while no less than 36 German shipping companies are registered in Cyprus. Meanwhile, France is having its own scandal over high-placed officials with offshore accounts.

Capitalist politicians promising to prevent tax evasion is a long-running joke in Greece, with its "Lagarde list" of Swiss bank account holders (named after IMF chief Christine Lagarde). Such talk is simply a distraction from the real fleecing of working people that takes place through capitalist exploitation. While working people have no power to force a "fair" taxation system upon the rich, as sundry left-talking, pro-EU types like those in Greece's Syriza coalition propose, the working class can disrupt the flow of profits by withdrawing its labor through strikes. However, sporadic outbursts of outrage will not suffice to resolve the current economic crisis.

The social power of the working class urgently needs to be mobilized in a struggle for decent jobs for all, for a shorter workweek with no loss in pay, for opening the books of the capitalists and their banks (to expose their plunder and theft). Such urgent needs demand seizing the banks, factories and mines from the capitalists with no compensation, placing these under the control of the workers. Only through fighting for such transitional demands and their culmination in the overthrow of the bourgeois state and its replacement with a proletarian dictatorship can the working class—in Europe and internationally—lead the way out of this crisis for all those thrown onto the scrap heap by capitalism.

Mobilizing the power of the working class in such struggle is anathema to the current pro-capitalist misleaders of the General Confederation of Work-

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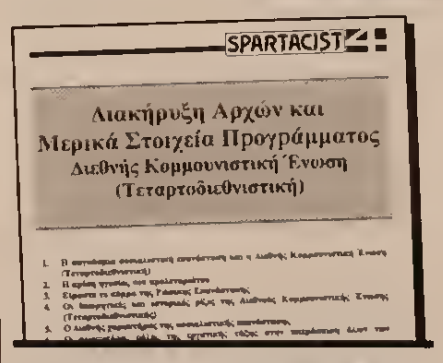
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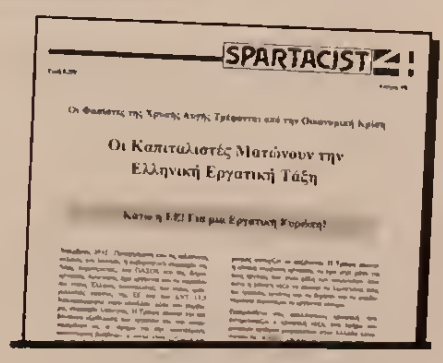
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ers of Greece (GSEE—private sector) and the Confederation of Public Servants (ADEDY) unions. While Greek workers have certainly demonstrated their willingness to fight, the GSEE and ADEDY bureaucracies refuse to challenge the capitalist order and thereby help consign the workers to increasing immiseration. Furthermore, an effective struggle against the economic crisis requires an internationalist perspective, linking up the workers of different nations in a common fight against the capitalist exploiters. But both the trade-union misleaders and organizations such as Syriza push the fallacy of reforming the capitalist profit system to serve the workers and the poor. This is explicit in Syriza's support to the EU and its promotion of the fraud that there can be a "social Europe" under capitalism.

The experience of the Republic of Cyprus shows that even a left capitalist government is subordinate to the imperialist masters. The reformist "Communists" of the Progressive Party for the Working People (AKEL), which held power from 2008 until February of this year, were responsible for implementing the first rounds of Troika-dictated austerity. When AKEL was seen to be dragging its feet on the harshest measures, the imperialists openly backed the right-wing candidacy of Anastasiades, with Merkel flying in to campaign for him in January! Having helped to carry out the attacks on its base and being seen as incapable of solving the economic crisis, AKEL was swept out of power by an electoral landslide for Anastasiades.

Speaking much louder than Syriza's occasional rhetoric about an international fightback against the Troika's policies was its recent formation of a "common social and political front to support Cyprus" with the extreme nationalist and anti-immigrant Independent Greeks party. Those right-wing populist opponents of the Troika, who want Greek capitalists to exploit and oppress the workers without the interference of foreign powers, clearly have no interest in solidarity with the working people of Cyprus, with its immigrant and Turkish Cypriot components. The purpose of this front is to whip up Greek nationalism in the guise of defending Cyprus against the Troika. Such nationalism, particularly anti-Turkish chauvinism, has been used time and again to deflect class struggle against the Greek capitalist rulers. This was demonstrated vividly in 1974 when the Greek military junta organized the coup in Cyprus, attempting to prop up its own shaky regime by rallying "true Greeks" around the flag.

The Greek rulers continue to promote themselves as protectors of Cyprus against their more powerful capitalist rival Turkey, as seen in recent vitriolic exchanges over the question of reunification of the island. Also at issue are the natural gas deposits off its southern coast. The Republic of Cyprus government claims sole sovereignty over these deposits (and the EU made sure to back this claim in the latest bailout memorandum), while Northern Cyprus demands that the gas be exploited jointly—a demand that Turkey backed up by sending warships and fighter jets into the area when exploratory drilling was being carried out in late 2011. Most recently, the Troika demanded that the Republic of Cyprus immediately initiate drilling in the contested area, indicating that the prospect of igniting a war does not deter the avaricious imperialist bankers.

Nicosia, July 1974: Turkish military invades Cyprus following coup by right-wing officers backed by Greek junta.

Greek Nationalism: Poison for the Working Class

The British maintained their colonial rule over Cyprus both through bloody repression and by taking advantage of the existence of a Turkish minority to use the old strategy of "divide and rule," giving some privileges to one people over another in order to prevent joint struggle against the colonial oppressors. Thus the right-wing guerrilla struggle that emerged in Cyprus in the 1950s against British rule and for union with Greece was virulently chauvinist against Turkish Cypriots. Suffice it to say that it was led by the WWII fascist collaborator Colonel Grivas and the head of the Greek Orthodox church in Cyprus, Archbishop Makarios. Cyprus gained its independence in 1960 under the "guarantee" of Britain, Turkey and Greece, but it did not take long for the first post-independence government to fall apart and for the island to descend into civil war in 1963-64. Following years of terror and counter-terror against both the Turkish and Greek Cypriot communities, a UN "peacekeeping" force was introduced in 1964 to police the population along with British troops.

The leading political force at that time was AKEL, which had both Greek and Turkish Cypriot members and leaders. This was anathema to reactionaries of all stripes. Central Committee member Dervis Ali Kavazoglou, a Turkish Cypriot, was assassinated by right-wing Turkish nationalist forces in 1965, and Greek Cypriot leaders and members were victims of right-wing terror carried out by both Greek and Turkish forces. The AKEL-led labor federation controlled half of the organized workers and had some history of leading Greek and Turkish Cypriot workers in joint struggle under British colonial rule. But rather than fighting for a perspective of inter-ethnic working-class unity independent of all representatives of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalism, the AKEL ended up embracing the conservative archbishop and president Makarios. Because of the archbishop's resistance to U.S. demands that he ban the Communists, which would have been deeply unpopular in Cyprus, and his looking to the Soviet Union for diplomatic support against the imperialists' machinations, he was falsely painted by Stalinists around the world as a leftist.

The 1974 coup against Makarios resulted in the first-ever united Greek and Turkish Cypriot demonstration against the Greek junta, which took place in London. This indicated the basis at that historic moment for a battle to be waged along *class* lines. But AKEL's response to the upsurge was to swear undying loyalty to Makarios. Following Turkey's invasion of Cyprus, Marxists were duty-bound to uphold a position of revolutionary defeatism on both sides—i.e., opposition to both Turkish and Greek military forces. AKEL, however, supported the junta-led forces who had just imprisoned and tortured thousands of AKEL members and drawn up lists for their execution! In the end, the defeat of Greek forces in Cyprus rapidly led to the fall of the junta in Greece itself.

September 1955: British troops in Cyprus with trilingual banner threatening brutal suppression of strike.

The events of 1974 had dire consequences in Cyprus. In "Cyprus Fiasco Topples Greek Junta" (*WV* No. 50, 2 August 1974), we noted that the Greek and Turkish communities "remain deeply hostile and far more integrated into the social life of their respective mother countries than into any kind of binational Cyprus." The article continued:

> "*None* of the solutions available under present social-economic conditions can possibly satisfy the aspirations of both majority and minority. *Enosis* (union with Greece), 'double *enosis*' (partition between Greece and Turkey), ceding sections of Thrace to Turkey in exchange for incorporating Cyprus into Greece and even the continuation of some sort of federated independent Cyprus would involve destructive forced mass population transfers and would contain within them the seeds of further bloody communal and national wars."

And in fact, about a third of Cyprus' population was driven from their homes and distinct Greek and Turkish areas were compacted, with thousands killed and wounded on both sides. AKEL's Stalinist popular-front politics of allying with bourgeois forces for "defense of our homeland" helped pave the way for the resurgence of national antagonisms and communal violence.

As we wrote in "The Founding of the Trotskyist Group of Greece" (November 2004): "Our fight is for a proletarian solution to the national question [in Cyprus], which of necessity requires the revolutionary overthrow of the nationalist bourgeoisies in Nicosia/Lefkosa, Athens and Ankara." In contrast, AKEL and much of the Greek left talk only of Turkish "occupiers" in Cyprus. Without proletarian revolutions in Turkey, Greece and beyond, the island's working people will always be subject to the domination of the imperialist and regional capitalist powers.

Instead of such a revolutionary internationalist perspective, both AKEL and the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) look to the enforcement of United Nations resolutions as the basis for solving the "Cyprus problem." The UN is an imperialist den of thieves and their victims under whose "democratic" fig leaf millions have been slaughtered and starved, from the 1950 U.S. invasion of Korea to the deadly sanctions imposed at the time of the first Iraq war in 1990. While the KKE leadership may sometimes warn against illusions in the UN, they have promoted precisely such illusions by saying that the Cyprus issue "had to be resolved in the framework of the decisions of a General Assembly of the UN" ("Cyprus and the New World Order," *Rizospastis*, 31 January 2003).

"The Working Men Have No Country"

Far from leading its large working-class membership in opposition to Greek nationalism and anti-Turkish chauvinism in a struggle for workers power, the KKE leadership teaches the workers to swallow this poison. The "Theses of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Greece" for an April party congress states: "The struggle for the defence of the borders, the sovereign rights of Greece, from the standpoint of the working class and the popular strata is integral to the struggle for the overthrow of the power of capital." Then-KKE general secretary Aleka Papariga made clear who the borders supposedly need to be defended against in a talk published in *Rizospastis* (31 March): "Of course we will defend our territory. And why, in other words, does the struggle for power not mean also the struggle for the borders, etc? Are we going to give Greece to the Turks?" She went on to posit that Albania, Bulgaria, Turkey and what she called the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (i.e., Macedonia) might attack Greece.

For the KKE leadership, spewing such nationalist demagogy goes hand in hand with preaching the absurd Stalinist dogma that socialism can be built in one country, even in a country as small and lacking in resources as Greece. The KKE tops' nationalism can only serve to repel revolutionary-minded workers in the countries that border Greece while tying Greek workers to the interests of the bourgeois state that is the mainstay of their exploitation and oppression. This lie is best refuted with some words from Lenin during the interimperialist slaughter of World War I:

> "With reference...to the tasks of the proletariat in its struggle to destroy, not feudalism but capitalism, the *Communist Manifesto* gives a clear and precise formula: 'The workingmen have no country.'... The socialist movement cannot triumph within the old framework of the fatherland. It creates new and superior forms of human society, in which the legitimate needs and progressive aspirations of the working masses of *each* nationality will, for the first time, be met through international unity, provided existing national partitions are removed. To the present-day bourgeoisie's attempts to divide and disunite them by means of hypocritical appeals for the 'defence of the fatherland' the class-conscious workers will reply with ever new and persevering efforts to unite the workers of various nations in the struggle to overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie of all nations."
>
> —"The Position and Tasks of the Socialist International," November 1914

The Trotskyist Group of Greece is committed to the task of forging a revolutionary party that, as Lenin said, will fight to unite the workers of different nations in the struggle to overthrow the bourgeoisies of all nations. This is why we and the entire ICL fight against the oppression of national minorities in Greece such as the Vlachs, Pomaks, Turks and Albanians and demand the right of self-determination for the Macedonians, while opposing the oppression of the Kurdish people by the rulers of Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran. We call for a socialist federation of the Balkans, the only framework in which the myriad national questions in this region can be equitably resolved. The working class needs a revolutionary leadership that is internationalist not only in words but in deeds, armed with a program to sweep capitalism and all the national divisions it breeds off the face of the earth. ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

Racist Cops: Guard Dogs of Capitalist Rulers

Stop-and-Frisk Trial and Bogus Police "Reform"

New York City

With black neighborhoods still simmering over the cop killing of 16-year-old Kimani Gray last month in Brooklyn, testimony in the "stop and frisk" class-action lawsuit *Floyd v. City of New York* continued this week in Federal District Court in Manhattan. Filed by the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) in 2008, the suit seeks to have aspects of the NYPD's stop-and-frisk policies ruled unconstitutional. On April 1, New York state senator Eric Adams, a former cop, testified that Police Commissioner Ray Kelly told him in a closed-door meeting that stop-and-frisk is intended to "instill fear" in black and Latino youth. Earlier, the court heard a tape recording submitted by Bronx police officer Pedro Serrano in which a deputy inspector told him to target "male blacks 14 to 21."

None of this is news to ghetto and barrio youth in this city, who already know that they are overwhelmingly the targets of cop terror on the streets. It is right to fight against stop-and-frisk, which recalls the "black codes," derived from slavery, that were central to Jim Crow—the earlier form of the segregation that is embedded in American capitalism. It's degrading and humiliating, and deadly. Last year Bronx teenager Ramarley Graham was gunned down in his own home after he tried to elude cops to avoid jail time for the small amount of marijuana he was carrying. Cops said Kimani Gray adjusted his waistband "in a suspicious manner" before they shot him in the streets of East Flatbush in Brooklyn.

With a pretext of searching for guns and drugs, police routinely harass minority youth who, if they so much as ask why they are being stopped, find themselves screamed at with racist slurs and slammed against the wall or forced to the ground, often enough with guns pointed at their heads. Since Michael Bloomberg became mayor in 2002, there have been more than five million stop-and-frisks. How this goes down can be seen in eight blocks of Brooklyn known as the Brownsville Houses, where police blanket the streets every night. Between January 2006 and March 2010, the NYPD made nearly 52,000 stops there—that's nearly one stop per year for every one of the 14,000 residents of the area. The name of everyone stopped—arrested or not—was logged into a police database.

Judge Shira Scheindlin, who is presiding over the *Floyd* case, ruled in January that elements of stop-and-frisk as practiced in the Bronx are unconstitutional but then lifted her ban shortly afterward. If she rules for the cops, they will no doubt feel more emboldened as they mete out their daily dose of racist brutality. If she rules against the NYPD, stripping this practice of its legal license, the cops will no doubt move to repackage their systematic abuse. As William Bratton recently blurted out; "For any city to say they don't do stop-and-frisk...I'm sorry, they don't know what the hell they are talking about. Every police department in America does it." Bratton ought to know. He ran police departments in Boston, New York and Los Angeles and now is acting as a "consultant" to the Oakland cops.

AP

Facebook

Myspace

June 2012 NYC protest against cops' stop-and-frisk campaign. Right: Kimani Gray (top) and Ramarley Graham, victims of killer cops.

The history of the CCR suit itself shows that there should be no illusions in judicial restraint of the cops. *Floyd* is a sequel to the *Daniels, et al. v. the City of New York* suit brought by the CCR in 1999 after New York City erupted in protest over the slaying of Amadou Diallo, a black African immigrant gunned down by the cops in a hail of 41 bullets. That suit challenged NYPD racial profiling and sought to disband the Street Crime Unit (SCU) that killed Diallo. The case was settled in 2003 when the City agreed to break up the SCU and to require that the NYPD "monitor" itself and have officers fill out forms documenting all stop-and-frisk encounters. It was because the cops showed "significant non-compliance" with the settlement that the CCR filed the new suit.

The New York Spartacist League joined with those who poured onto the streets of East Flatbush last month in outrage over the gunning down of Kimani Gray and in the face of a cop lockdown of the area. We demand the dropping of all charges against those who have protested stop-and-frisk, including Revolutionary Communist Party supporter Noche Díaz, who faces more than four years in prison. We also demand that all charges stemming from protests against the killing of Kimani Gray be dropped. As we explained in "Kimani Gray Killed in Cold Blood by NYPD" (*WV* No. 1020, 22 March), the police are the guard dogs of racist American capitalism. There will be no end to the terror they mete out until the working class carries out a socialist revolution that overturns the entire system of capitalist exploitation, and with that the special oppression of black people that lies in its bedrock.

WV Photo

December 2006 NYC protest against killing of Sean Bell, gunned down by NYPD in hail of 50 bullets.

In the five weeks of the *Floyd* trial so far, a variety of protesters have packed the court, including gay rights activists and Muslims who have themselves been victims of NYPD harassment. Also turning out are the four leading Democratic candidates in this year's mayoral race—in other words, those running to be the cops' top boss as Bloomberg ends his reign. Their concern is the tarnishing of the NYPD's credentials, requiring the application of some cosmetic "reform" to appease public anger and to make the cops more effective as a force of repression.

At a March 19 mayoral forum in Queens, the leading Democratic contender, City Council speaker Christine Quinn, trumpeted a proposal that had been raised by councilmen Jumaane Williams and Brad Lander for a police inspector general to "help the NYPD work more efficiently and effectively." A spokesman for Communities United for Police Reform claims that this "would be an important first step in ensuring New Yorkers have faith that the NYPD is accountable for their actions" (*Amsterdam News*, 11 April). NYC already has a 13-person civilian review board (that goes back decades), a police corruption commission and other "control" mechanisms. Yet racist killings of minority youth

continued on page 9

WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 1023

3 May 2013

In Wake of Boston Bombing

Ominous Display of Police-State Powers

The bombing that killed three spectators at the Boston Marathon—an eight-year-old child, a young restaurant manager and a university student from China—and wounded more than 260 others was naturally viewed with abhorrence by people in the U.S. and internationally, with many contributing funds for surviving victims of this criminal act of indiscriminate terror. And just as naturally, this country's capitalist rulers seized the opportunity to further their offensive against the rights of the population. Amid a tide of "national unity" patriotism and slogans proclaiming "Boston strong," the government in essence declared that when the "terror" threat is invoked, police-state measures like the lockdown of Boston are the "new normal," and people had better accept that. Portrayed as heroes in Boston were the same cops whose job is to maintain capitalist "order" through organized violence against workers and minorities.

From the first reports of the bombing, the capitalist media did their best to whip up a climate of racist hysteria. Based on no evidence, CNN falsely reported that a "dark-skinned male" had been arrested for the bombing. Every black man in America knows what that can mean. The *New York Post* reported that the prime suspect was a Saudi man, who turned out to be one of those injured in the blast. Then the *Post* fingered two innocent men, one of them a Moroccan,

continued on page 10

Capitalist Profit Drive Kills

Texas, Bangladesh Disasters

Reuters photos

Left: Burning remains of fertilizer plant a day after deadly explosion in West, Texas. Right: Garment worker rescued from rubble of eight-story building that collapsed in Savar, Bangladesh, killing hundreds.

"There was this huge wall of black smoke and people were coming out of it," said one survivor of the April 17 fertilizer plant explosion in West, Texas. "It reminded me so much of 9/11." At least 14 people were killed, mainly firefighters who were battling a blaze at the plant when an enormous cache of ammonium nitrate is reported to have blown up. The blast, which measured 2.1 on the Richter scale and dug a crater ten feet deep and 93 feet wide, injured over 200 people and damaged buildings in a five-block radius.

This disaster was no accident but rather a testament to the murderous workings of the capitalist profit system, in which the bottom line trumps safety. West Fertilizer had been operating for years in flagrant violation of accepted safety standards. Cutting corners to save money is the name of the game for capitalist enterprise, and tragedy all too often follows. Witness the April 2010 explosions in Massey Energy's Upper Big Branch mine in West Virginia that claimed 29 lives and on British Petroleum's Deepwater Horizon rig in the Gulf of Mexico that killed eleven workers. The leveling of the town of West itself recalled the 1947 explosion of a boatload of ammonium nitrate in the harbor of Texas City, Texas, which left nearly 600 dead and 5,000 injured.

More than 4,500 workers are killed on the job in the U.S. each year, the equivalent of 25 West Fertilizers a month. Another 50,000 are felled annually by occupational illnesses, such as black lung disease, the bane of coal miners. Millions more suffer non-fatal injuries and sickness. And it's not only the workers who pay the price for the capitalists' disregard for basic safety. As West, Texas, expanded over the years, a school, an apartment building and a nursing home were built next to the fertilizer powder keg.

The capitalist government, whether run by Democrats or Republicans, gives the owners virtually free rein to run their factories and mines as ticking time bombs. Then, when fatalities do occur, government officials are likely to intone that there are "no indications of criminal activity," as one proclaimed following the West explosion. Since its founding in 1970, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has prosecuted 84 cases involving fatalities, with those sentenced serving a total of ***89 months*** in jail. During this time, there were more than 370,000 workplace deaths.

As Russell Mokhiber, editor of *Corporate Crime Reporter*, aptly remarked shortly after the West disaster:

> "Make no mistake, if it becomes clear that the Texas explosion was triggered by a terrorist attack, a la the Oklahoma City bombing, then Obama will begin talking about 'the full weight of justice.'
>
> "But if the focus is corporate crime and violence, corporate recklessness, workplace safety, 'full weight of justice' rhetoric won't see the light of day."
>
> —"Corporate Terrorism in West Texas," *CounterPunch*, 19 April

Now that the amount of ammonium nitrate stored in the plant has come to light, what has some in Congress, like Democrat Bennie Thompson of Mississippi, exercised is the lack of oversight...by Homeland Security!

Third World Sweatshop Tombs

Barely a week after the Texas explosion, the Rana Plaza building in Savar, Bangladesh, one of the poorest countries on the planet, collapsed on more than 3,000 garment workers toiling in five sweatshops. Mostly young women, they had resisted going to work after walls in the building began to show cracks the previous day. "Management forced us to go up and said there was no problem with the building," recounted one survivor. "Just after that, I sat at my table to work, and the building just collapsed" (*Democracy Now!*, 25 April). Despite heroic efforts by firefighters and other rescue personnel to find survivors, nearly 400 dead bodies have been dug from the rubble in what is

continued on page 11

In Memory of Barbara Sullivan

Darinka Chase

New York
23 April 2013

Dear Comrades,

I'm very sad to be writing this. The person dearest to me, Barbara Sullivan, died at age 56 on March 18 in New York City after a two-year battle with liver disease. Battle is not an overstatement; she took her treatment seriously, following her doctors' instructions even when they resulted in massive discomfort and short-term debilitation. She sought out other options on her own, discussing them with her doctors.

From a large liberal Catholic family on the South Side of Chicago, Barbara grew up in the 1960s hating injustice, inequality and segregation. As a kid she went on several civil rights marches with her parents and siblings.

She moved to NYC in 1986 to pursue a career as a painter and to join other friends who'd made the move for similar reasons. I joined her here in 1988. We were both outraged by the brutality and racial oppression of capitalism, and because of that we were drawn to the Partisan Defense Committee in 1995 around the fight to save Mumia Abu-Jamal's life when the death warrant was signed. Beginning then, we went to numerous protests on many issues that were called by the Spartacist League or went as part of their contingents. She was at the 1999 NYC anti-Klan mobilization initiated by the PDC and was very proud that we kept the Klan from marching.

Barbara became a member of the Labor Black League in 1996. As its secretary for several years, she was known for her conscientiousness. She helped produce a number of LBL newsletters. From then through the mid 2000s, she gave her time and clerical skills to aid the PDC's office work and transcribed some forums for the SL.

Although she wasn't a Marxist, Barbara was a partisan of the working class and understood, respected and appreciated the program of the SL. Like many workers, she became more engaged when there were battles to be fought.

A memorial was held for her on April 20 at the American Federation of Musicians Local 820 hall, a place she'd been to many times before at Spartacist forums. Eighty of her beautiful paintings were hanging around the room. By the end, the hall was packed. A good number of those present were comrades of the SL who had gotten to know Barbara over the years. Barbara was liked by all who knew her and loved by many.

Comradely greetings,
Don D.

An Appreciation of Tweet Carter

The letter printed below, dated March 16, was sent to the Spartacist League/U.S. by John S., a former member of the ICL, writing from Australia. Tweet Carter's obituary appeared in WV *No. 1014 (7 December 2012).*

While the timing of this letter is a bit down the track, I wanted to say a couple of things about Tweet Carter. Her death was saddening. She was someone whom I liked and for whom I had some respect.

While I cannot know if the treatment she was subjected to during the recent hurricane contributed to her death, I do know from my observation of the New South Wales hospital system that older people, particularly older women, are treated abysmally. Given the continuing decay of capitalism generally, I cannot believe that NSW hospitals are unique.

Communists are where you find them. Being the daughter of faded southern aristocracy Tweet was one of the best examples. On occasion, that persona proved to be quite disarming for political opponents.

I worked with Tweet for about a year in Los Angeles from June 1972 until she transferred to the San Francisco Bay Area in mid-1973. She was the political chairman of a local that had a significant number of young and/or newly-recruited members. The local did a few strange things (what became known as the "rubber mats" campaign at Los Angeles City College is one example that comes to mind). Nevertheless, there were successes. Tweet's work helped lay the basis for recruiting several young black comrades in LA. As well, she played a key role in the acquisition of a grouping in and around the Young Socialist Alliance in Arizona (as a fringe benefit of that effort, we did get to see the Grand Canyon).

WV Photo

Tweet Carter speaks for Spartacist League at May 1973 debate with Workers League in Los Angeles.

Tweet was one of the key comrades who led the fight to lance the eruption of the Cunningham-Treiger clique in mid-1972. In particular, she initiated and led an aggressive intervention into the SF Bay Area local where Cunningham was ensconced. The clique elements, in order to justify their own demoralisation had a view that could be described as "the program is everything; the party is nothing except a personality cult." This was pretty funny given that their basis was largely personal. They did not like Cannon much. He was not warm and fuzzy. All he could do was to build a party.

While Tweet (and I) was perhaps at times over-zealous, she acted in the best Bolshevik tradition as a hard party loyalist. I think that she was crucial in this battle that defined the role of the party in the tradition of Cannon. I think that was true both nationally and in particular on the West Coast where it made that tradition concrete in a way that was not evident before. As well, it helped to integrate many new and capable comrades.

I recently re-read the account of a debate (*Workers Vanguard* No. 22, 8 June 1973) with the Wohlforthite Workers League. They only agreed reluctantly to the debate and had two speakers. Tweet spoke for the Spartacist League. She systematically picked apart the Workers League presentations both on the specifics and on larger programmatic questions. The article nicely conveys her political capacity and her ability to get the crux of a question.

Her statement that she lived as she had intended reminded me of Susan Adrian who made a similar comment. I think that both of them were fine examples of individuals who overcame *some* of the more invidious aspects of women's oppression, a task made more likely because they were committed communists.

I had not seen Tweet for a very long time and I am sorry for that. She was an individual who never failed to make an impact. She will be long and fondly remembered. ■

TROTSKY

LENIN

Proletarian Revolution: Answer to Capitalist Decay

The austerity and massive unemployment racking the southern tier of the European Union are hallmarks of the ongoing world economic crisis. In contrast to Eduard Bernstein, who projected that socialism would peacefully evolve from the bourgeois order, and other revisionists who predicted a final capitalist collapse, revolutionary Marxists understand that not even the most severe crisis is sufficient in itself to sweep this system away. Rather, as Leon Trotsky wrote, only proletarian revolution can lift humanity from capitalist decay.

The Bernsteinians outlined two perspectives: one, unreal, allegedly orthodox "Marxist," according to which in the long run, under the influence of the internal contradictions of capitalism, its mechanical collapse was supposed to take place; and the second, "realistic," according to which a gradual evolution from capitalism to socialism was to be accomplished. Antithetical as these two schemas may be at first glance, they are nevertheless united by a common trait: the absence of the revolutionary factor. While they disavowed the caricature of the automatic collapse of capitalism attributed to them, the Marxists demonstrated that, under the influence of the sharpening class struggle, the proletariat would carry through the revolution long before the objective contradictions of capitalism could lead to its automatic collapse....

The most important component of the theory of collapse was the theory of pauperization. The Marxists contended, with some prudence, that the sharpening of social contradictions need not signify unconditionally an absolute drop in the standard of living of the masses. But in reality, it is precisely this latter process which is unfolding. Wherein could the collapse of capitalism express itself more acutely than in chronic unemployment and the destruction of social insurance, that is, the refusal of the social order to feed its own slaves?

The opportunistic brakes in the working class have proved to be powerful enough to grant the elemental forces of outlived capitalism additional decades of life. As a result, it is not the idyll of the peaceful transformation of capitalism into socialism which has taken place, but a state of affairs infinitely closer to social decay....

Reformism will be unable to shift the historical responsibility from itself. By paralyzing and curbing the revolutionary energy of the proletariat, the international Social Democracy invests the process of the capitalist collapse with the blindest, most unbridled, catastrophic, and bloody forms.

Of course, one cannot speak of a realization of the revisionist caricature of Marxism except conditionally, in applying it to some given historical period. The way out of decaying capitalism, however, will be found, even if after a great delay, not upon the road of the automatic collapse but upon the revolutionary road.

—Leon Trotsky, "The Only Road" (14 September 1932), reprinted in *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany* (1971)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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Young Spartacus

For Free, Quality, Integrated Education for All!

Budget Slashers Attack City College of San Francisco

City College of San Francisco (CCSF), one of the few remaining avenues to higher education for its 85,000 predominantly working-class, poor and minority students, is threatened with being shut down. Last July, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) told the college that it would lose accreditation—i.e., face closure—if it did not sufficiently address the commission's demands for fiscal and structural changes. The ACCJC particularly cited the costs of CCSF's wages and benefits for the unionized faculty and campus workers. Seizing on the threatened sanction, the campus administration unilaterally imposed an 8.8 percent wage cut and began axing faculty and clerical workers' jobs, paving the way to slashing more classes and even entire programs. Already, the administration has announced that it plans to close two of CCSF's nine campus sites.

Young Spartacus

February 21 rally at CCSF protesting threatened closure of college.

The ACCJC's own report makes clear that the accreditation sanction has nothing to do with the quality of education at CCSF. In fact, the report commends "several exemplary models of demonstrated educational quality." What they object to is that such programs and the unionized faculty who staff the departments haven't been sufficiently slashed. Their purpose is to streamline programs that educate technicians and other skilled workers as are needed by business and get rid of the rest. Such cuts could potentially target bilingual education, food service and hospitality classes that allow working-class youth to get jobs in SF's unionized hotel industry, as well as job-training programs for those just released from America's prison hellholes.

California's community college system is the largest in the country. For years it had provided working-class and poor youth with their best shot at getting into the elite University of California (UC) system, while offering other such students their only access to any education beyond the increasingly underfunded and decrepit high schools. But having wiped out whole swaths of industry and manufacturing, the American bourgeoisie has for decades been choking off funding for public education, seeing little value in educating youth for whom there are no jobs.

The attacks against CCSF are part of a broad nationwide assault on public schools and teachers unions. And California has led the nation on this score, particularly since the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978. A tax revolt by white property owners, Prop. 13 cut spending on social programs benefiting black people, minorities and the poor, with schools taking some of the biggest hits. The 2007-08 capitalist economic meltdown sent the budget-slashing, union-busting drive into high gear. Funding for the community college system has been slashed by over $1 billion, a quarter of classes have been cut entirely, and despite the fiction of "free tuition" the fees for classes have risen by an astronomical *255 percent* in nine years.

Over the last several months, CCSF students, as well as faculty organized in the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), have participated in rallies against the attacks on the college. Protests organized by the Save CCSF Coalition, in which the reformist Socialist Organizer (S.O.) plays a leading role, have pleaded with CCSF Chancellor Thelma Scott-Skillman and the Board of Trustees to "reverse all cuts" and "promote equity." A banner at a February 21 protest demanded "Trustees: Put Us First! We Are S.F. City College!" Fat chance of that! The whole purpose of the Board of Trustees is to enforce the dictates of the capitalist rulers whose interests they represent, and that means bringing down the budget ax. S.O. couples its entreaties to the good offices of the Chancellor with appeals to the bourgeoisie to fork out more tax money to fund education.

The government's tax code flows from the class and social relations that define racist American capitalism, a system of production for profit based on the exploitation of labor and the brutal subjugation of black people. Look at Proposition A—a property parcel tax intended specifically to provide funds to stop budget cuts and layoffs at CCSF. Recognizing the importance of the school, an overwhelming majority of SF voters supported Prop. A in last November's elections. But the rulers hold the purse strings. As Chancellor Scott-Skillman and the Board of Trustees made clear, they have no intention of using these funds to "save CCSF." Rather, they have pledged that money raised under Prop. A will go to building up the college's financial reserves, while the axing of jobs and classes continues.

There is no lack of money in this rich country that could be used to provide free, quality education for all. But for working people to get their hands on that wealth will require nothing less than socialist revolution to break the power of the bourgeoisie. It is this revolutionary perspective that guides the Spartacus Youth Club, which has intervened into student and labor rallies protesting the closure of CCSF. As a Spartacist speaker declared at a February 21 protest:

> "CCSF isn't going to be saved by appealing to the chancellor or the campus administration, which really exists to serve the capitalist rulers on the campus.... And it isn't going to be saved by appealing for 'bridge loans' to the Democratic Party city administration, which has been cutting wages, benefits and jobs for workers all over the city. Alongside the students, there has to be mobilized the power of the workers, the people who make this city run.... The people who go to school here are the children of working-class people, and working people in this city and the whole Bay Area have an innate interest in fighting to save CCSF. And that fight must be mobilized around the call for free, quality, integrated education for everybody."

The SYC demands: No tuition, open admissions and a full living stipend for all students! Abolish the Board of Trustees and the administration! Those who work, study and teach at the colleges and universities should run them—for worker/student/teacher control!

Young Spartacus

NYC: Protest against tuition hike at City University of New York.

Race and Class Privilege in Education

Contrary to the myth that college and university campuses are ivory towers that exist apart from the broader society, the attack on CCSF shows in the realm of higher education the race and class privilege at the core of American capitalism. The whole history of the community college system provides a concrete demonstration that the bourgeoisie seeks to spend on educating poor and working-class youth only what they can realize back in profit through the exploitation of their labor. From the beginning, the conception of such colleges was to provide skilled workers and technicians for industry. They massively grew in the aftermath of World War II, particularly to provide workers for the growing defense industries that had moved to California. Indeed, when these industries faced a labor shortage during the war, California shipyard owners recruited untrained and often semiliterate Southern youth, many of them black, who learned how to read and write and often became skilled apprentices in little more than three months.

Following the war, the GI Bill provided free tuition for those who had served as cannon fodder for U.S. imperialism. Working-class and poor families thought that their sons and daughters would finally have access to higher education and a better future. But with enrollment skyrocketing, including many knocking on the door for entry into the prestigious University of California system, a committee headed by UC Berkeley Chancellor Clark Kerr came up with the Master Plan for Education in 1960. Qualifications for getting into UC were ramped up to limit enrollment to the top 12 percent of high school graduates. Meanwhile, the California state colleges, which previously had largely been teacher-training institutions, became officially recognized as liberal arts colleges. Qualifications for entry were tightened to apply to only 33 percent of high school graduates as opposed to the previous 50 to 70 percent. Community and junior colleges were to take and train the rest.

Affirmative action—a limited gain of the civil rights movement—allowed

continued on page 9

Give It Back to the Oglala!

Wounded Knee Massacre Site Up for Sale

There is no more potent symbol of the genocide, wholesale land theft and dispossession meted out to the Native American peoples than Wounded Knee. It was the site of the last battle of the so-called Indian Wars—the 1890 massacre of some 300 men, women and children by the U.S. Army's Seventh Cavalry. This was the same Seventh Cavalry once headed by one George Armstrong Custer, which was routed in the battle of Little Big Horn by the Lakota and their allies four years earlier. That may well have accounted for just how bloodthirsty the Army's slaughter at Wounded Knee was. It was due to that legacy that this was also the site of the 1973 American Indian Movement (AIM) occupation and subsequent stand-off with federal agents armed to the teeth.

For the next three years, the Oglala Sioux Pine Ridge Reservation was subjected to a reign of terror by hundreds of FBI and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) agents, supplemented by trained and armed thugs. Some 69 tribal members were victims of unsolved murders. Mass arrests were carried out and militants like Leonard Peltier were framed up and imprisoned (see accompanying article).

Adding insult to grave injury, the Wounded Knee site is now up for sale by a private owner for $3.9 million. The Oglala reportedly have a May 1 deadline to come up with the money or the site may be sold to one of the investment groups that have made offers. To say that the Oglala Sioux are cash-strapped is a cruel understatement. Having had their land stolen through broken treaties as well as by legislation sanctioning massive land grabs and sales to non-Native settlers as part of allotment schemes, those who survive at Pine Ridge live in conditions of absolute hopeless poverty. From 1980 to 2000, the counties that make up Pine Ridge comprised the poorest in the country. The 2000 census found them the third poorest, only because things got worse on two other South Dakota reservations. As of 2007, the unemployment rate was a staggering 80-90 percent, per capita income was $4,000, and teens committed suicide at four times the national rate. Infant mortality is three times the national rate, and life expectancy is the lowest in the United States and second-lowest in the Western Hemisphere, after Haiti.

Trager & Kuhn

Soldiers bury corpses of Native Americans slaughtered by Army at Wounded Knee In December 1890.

The U.S. government stole the lands around Wounded Knee. They should be given back to the Oglala to do with as they see fit! There is no way to undo the destruction of the aboriginal tribes by the racist rulers who founded their republic on the backs of black chattel slaves and whose westward march was guided by the spirit of General Sheridan's infamous remark: "There are no good Indians but dead Indians." Only the destruction of capitalism through proletarian revolution and the inauguration of the era of socialist development can ensure the all-sided, voluntary integration of American Indians into society on the basis of the fullest equality and meet the special needs created by a history of injustice and oppression.

Last year, the Departments of Justice and the Interior (which oversees the Bureau of Indian Affairs) announced a $1 billion settlement over nearly 56 million acres of Indian land held "in trust" by Washington but in fact exploited by timber, farming, mining and other commercial interests with little benefit to the tribes. Attorney General Eric Holder proclaimed that the settlement "fairly and honorably resolves historical grievances over the accounting and management of tribal trust funds, trust lands and other non-monetary trust resources that, for far too long, have been a source of conflict between Indian tribes and the United States" (London *Guardian*, 4 May 2012). Ha!

The reality is that the successive defeats of the Native Americans in their struggles to preserve some independence from the capitalist state are reflected in the changes in the legal status of the tribes. In 1830, the Supreme Court ruled that the tribes "had always been considered as distinct, independent, political communities, retaining their original natural rights," only to be informed by President Andrew Jackson that the Court could try to enforce this decision, but he controlled the army and was going to relocate the Cherokee. He did so under his bluntly named Indian Removal Act of 1830. Some 20,000 Cherokees were marched at gunpoint from Georgia to Oklahoma, with a quarter of those perishing on this Trail of Tears.

The Dawes Act of 1887 broke up, with few exceptions, what remained of the native communal holdings through a land-allotment system that gave small parcels to individual Native Americans and threw the rest onto the open market. Although citizenship was finally granted to Native Americans in 1924, the government has maintained an essentially custodial relationship to the reservations, holding the land "in trust."

Until the New Deal's Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) of 1934, the reservations were ruled autocratically by BIA agents. Designed as a reform measure to introduce limited self-rule, the IRA resulted in the creation of a layer of Indian bureaucrats on the reservations who rubber-stamp government policies and sell tribal land and mineral holdings. Later the government attempted to terminate tribal status and thereby end federal assistance programs and tax exemptions, the economic margin upon which many survive. Through this, the capitalist rulers washed

continued on page 11

AIM Leader Leonard Peltier: 37 Years in Prison Hell

Leonard Peltier is known throughout the world as one of the most prominent political prisoners in the United States. His 37 years of incarceration due to his courageous activism in the American Indian Movement (AIM) has come to symbolize the U.S. rulers' racist repression of the country's indigenous people, survivors of centuries of genocidal oppression.

Peltier emerged as a Native American leader in the late 1960s. In response to the hideous oppression he experienced and saw all around him, he became involved in struggles for Native American rights and joined AIM. It was in his capacity as a trusted AIM activist that he came to assist the Oglala Lakota people of the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota in the mid 1970s. AIM came into the government's crosshairs because it was attempting to combat the enforced poverty of Native Americans and the continued theft of their lands by the Feds and the energy companies, which were intent on grabbing rich uranium deposits under Sioux land in western South Dakota. The hated Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the FBI turned Pine Ridge into a war zone as they trained and armed thugs to terrorize and crush Indian activists. Between 1973 and 1976, these forces carried out more than 300 attacks, killing at least 69 people.

In June 1975, 250 FBI and BIA agents, SWAT police and local vigilantes descended on Pine Ridge and precipitated a shootout. Two FBI agents were killed, and Peltier and three others were charged. All charges were dropped against one AIM activist, and two others were acquitted as jurors stated that they did not believe "much of anything" said by government witnesses and that it seemed "pretty much a clear-cut case of self-defense" against the murderous FBI-led assault.

The government then went into overdrive to assure a conviction against Peltier. His trial was moved to Fargo, North Dakota, a city with strong bias against Native Americans. The prosecution concealed ballistics tests showing that Peltier's gun could not have been used in the shootings while the trial judge ruled out any possibility of another acquittal on grounds of self-defense by refusing to allow any evidence of government terror against Pine Ridge activists. In April 1977, Peltier was convicted by an all-white jury and sentenced to two consecutive life terms.

Successive court proceedings have laid bare the evidence of Peltier's innocence and of massive prosecutorial misconduct. In a 1985 appeals hearing, the government's lead attorney admitted, "We can't prove who shot those agents." In 1986, the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the trial jury could have acquitted Peltier if records improperly withheld from the defense had been made available. In 2003, the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals stated, "Much of the government's behavior at the Pine Ridge Reservation and in its prosecution of Mr. Peltier is to be condemned. The government withheld evidence. It intimidated witnesses. These facts are not disputed." Nevertheless, in August 2009 the U.S. Parole Commission again turned down Peltier's request for parole, declaring that Peltier would not be considered for parole for another 15 years! For Peltier, who is now 68 years old, this in effect was a declaration by the state that this courageous man will die in prison.

Cainmo.com

The long trail of injustice against Leonard Peltier has been documented in the film *Incident at Oglala*, narrated by Robert Redford, and in Peter Matthiessen's book *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse*. Decades of unjust imprisonment have not only robbed him of the prime years of his life. They have also taken a devastating toll on his physical well-being as he suffers from diabetes, high blood pressure, partial blindness and a heart condition. We join millions around the world in demanding: *Free Leonard Peltier now!* ■

Partisan Defense Committee

CLASS-STRUGGLE DEFENSE NOTES

The PDC is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League.

Defend the NATO 3!

Chicago Tribune

20 May 2012: Virtual state of siege was declared in Chicago as police went after protesters during NATO summit.

Chicago

For nearly a year, Brent Betterly, Jared Chase, and Brian Jacob Church have been locked away in Cook County Jail, facing possible 40-year prison stretches on an array of "terrorism" and other trumped-up charges, with bail set at $1.5 million each. Last spring, these Occupy activists traveled from Florida to Chicago in the lead-up to protests against a May 20 summit of the U.S.-dominated NATO imperialist military alliance. The city was under a virtual state of siege orchestrated by Mayor Rahm Emanuel, with thousands of National Guardsmen, troops and cops mobilized to shield the summit from over 10,000 protesters. On May 16, Betterly, Chase and Church—now known as the NATO 3—were arrested for a supposed plot to make four Molotov cocktails and hurl them at police stations and other targets. The highly publicized arrests were part of a campaign to brand the protests as violent, in order to chill opposition to the NATO war criminals who have the blood of untold thousands in Afghanistan and elsewhere on their hands.

As the Partisan Defense Committee wrote in a 21 May 2012 protest letter to the Cook County State's Attorney (printed in *WV* No. 1003, 25 May 2012), "The arrests of Betterly, Church and Chase have all the earmarks of a classic case of police entrapment and provocation." The arrests came less than a week after the defendants had posted a video on YouTube of a Chicago cop who had pulled their car over, threatening them: "We'll come look for you, each and every one of you."

In January, the NATO 3's lawyers filed a motion to dismiss the "terrorism" charges on constitutional grounds. The defense motion paints a chilling picture of how undercover cops known as Mo and Gloves tried every trick in the book to set the activists up:

> "Despite a more than two-week continuing effort by the undercover Chicago police officers posing as fellow members of Occupy to entice and encourage the defendants to carry out some criminal act, the defendants never did anything.... It was only in desperation, after two weeks of nothing to show for their undercover infiltration of the defendants, and the untold resources expended to facilitate those efforts, that the police suggested at least some bottles of gasoline [Molotov cocktails] be put together. The defendants never discussed a specific plan of what to do with these bottles, let alone a plan to use them to intimidate or coerce a significant portion of the civilian population. In fact, the bottles were always in possession of the under-cover police who suggested their own provocative ideas for how to use the bottles."

Just moments after the bottles were filled with gasoline, the undercover cops sent a prearranged signal, and the police then raided the apartment with guns drawn. They proceeded to ransack the place, confiscating computers, cellphones and political literature.

The NATO 3 were not the only activists set up and slapped with felony charges prior to the military summit. Sebastian Senakiewicz and Mark Neiweem were charged with "falsely making a terrorist threat" and "attempted possession of an incendiary device" respectively. Both took non-cooperating plea deals and remain imprisoned. In all, over 100 anti-NATO protesters were arrested, from pacifist liberals to anarchoid activists. Also arrested during the weekend of the May 20 protest were the Tinley Park 5, anti-fascists who have been convicted for helping break up a white-supremacist gathering in a Chicago suburb (see accompanying article).

On March 27, Judge Thaddeus Wilson denied the NATO 3's defense motion to dismiss, in a court hearing that was clearly designed to intimidate the defendants and everyone who came out on their behalf. Observers noted that while the judge announced his ruling, the defendants were held in a separate room, sealed off by soundproof glass and away from their supporters, with an armed, uniformed cop for each of them. Meanwhile, four armed cops sat in the audience. "It's what a lot of scholars and people who pay attention to national security call the 'new normal'," said Thomas Durkin, a lawyer for Chase. In simple terms, the "new normal" is a creeping police state.

As the NATO 3's motion pointed out, the Illinois statutory definition of terrorism is so vague and broad that it could include "labor strikes, peaceful occupations and sit-ins, political protests and boycotts." Ever since the inception of the "war on terror" in 2001, we have warned that while the first targets were mainly immigrants, particularly Muslims and those from the Near East, the ultimate targets would be the labor movement, black people, the left and anyone who would dare to protest the depredations of U.S. imperialism, at home or abroad. And indeed, leftist political activity of many stripes has increasingly become a focal point of "anti-terror" repression.

In 2008, a host of undercover agents wormed their way into the organizing of protests at the Republican National Convention in Minneapolis, entrapping activists on "terrorism" charges. One agent later infiltrated the Minneapolis branch of the reformist Freedom Road Socialist Organization (FRSO—publishers of *Fight Back!*). This led in 2010 to FBI raids and grand jury subpoenas against 23 leftists and trade unionists in Chicago and Minneapolis, many of them FRSO supporters, as part of a witch-hunting investigation falsely identifying solidarity efforts on behalf of Palestinian and Colombian leftists with "material support to terrorism." Last November, four Cleveland supporters of the populist Occupy movement received prison terms ranging from six to eleven and a half years for a plot concocted by an FBI informant. Meanwhile police "red squads," which had largely gone underground in the wake of the social upheavals of the 1960s, have resurfaced in many cities under the guise of investigating "terrorism."

A dangerous vise is being tightened around political protest in this country. First Amendment rights and other civil liberties are shredded in the name of "homeland security," while the state's moles and rats cook up felonious "plots" aimed at luring political dissenters close enough to slap charges on them. This is a concerted, ***bipartisan*** effort. The use of anti-terror laws against leftists has accelerated under the Democratic administration of Barack Obama. From San Francisco, Oakland and Portland to Minneapolis, Chicago and Cleveland, it has been Democratic Party mayors who have led the crackdowns and witchhunts aimed at Occupy and other protesters.

The NATO 3 are scheduled for trial on September 16. The PDC, a legal and social defense organization associated with the Marxist Spartacist League, calls on the left and labor movements to join in demanding: ***Drop all the charges now!*** The PDC has donated $200 to the legal defense of the NATO 3 and encourages others to do the same. Donations can be made at https://www.wepay.com/donations/nato-5-defense. ■

Free Tinley Park Anti-Fascists!

Last May, some 18 anti-racist militants broke up a gathering of fascists in the Chicago suburb of Tinley Park called to organize a "White Nationalist Economic Summit." Among the vermin sent scurrying were some with links to the Stormfront Web site run by a former Ku Klux Klan grand dragon. Such fascist meetings are not merely right-wing discussion clubs but organizing centers for race terror against black people, Jews, immigrants, gays and anyone else the white-supremacists consider subhuman. For their basic act of social sanitation, five of the anti-fascist fighters were sentenced by a Cook County court to prison terms of three-and-a-half to six years on charges of "armed violence." (See "Freedom Now for Tinley Park 5!" *WV* No. 1018, 22 February.)

The Spartacist League and the Partisan Defense Committee stand by these militants and call on workers, leftists and anti-racist fighters to demand freedom for the Tinley Park Five. The fascists are a deadly threat to the integrated labor movement, which should be in the forefront of efforts to crush them in the egg. Four of the five who were sentenced—Jason Sutherlin, Cody Lee Sutherlin, Dylan Sutherlin and Alex Stuck—have agreed to receive $25 monthly stipends the PDC sends to class-war prisoners. The PDC program, which includes additional gifts during the holiday season, serves not merely to alleviate some of the harshness of incarceration but also as a message of solidarity from those outside prison walls.

The courage of the Tinley Park defendants was seen in their principled response to the government vendetta. Each of the five was initially charged with 37 felony counts, including armed violence, property damage and mob action. The cops and prosecutors applied continuous pressure to try to get them to give up names of those involved in sending the fascists scattering, which the five steadfastly refused to do. Unable to meet the exorbitant bonds, which ranged up to $250,000, they spent seven months in Cook County Jail. Facing the prospect of up to another year behind bars awaiting trial, they accepted a non-cooperating agreement in which each pleaded guilty to three counts of armed violence in return for guarantees of time off for good behavior.

In their letters agreeing to receive PDC stipends, the four expressed appreciation for the contributions and also for the issues of *Class-Struggle Defense Notes* and *Workers Vanguard* that they have received. One noted that his fellow inmates lined up to read the *WV* article about their case.

Initiated in 1986, the stipend program takes as its model that of the International Labor Defense (ILD), affiliated to the early Communist Party, which provided stipends to over 100 prisoners of the class war. As James P. Cannon, founder and first secretary of the ILD, wrote, "The class conscious worker accords to the class war prisoners a place of singular honor and esteem" ("The Cause That Passes Through a Prison," *Labor Defender* [September 1926]). Past PDC recipients worldwide include an Irish Republican Socialist Party militant, members of the British National Union of Mineworkers and members of the U.S. miners, Teamsters and Steelworkers unions. Now, the Tinley Park anti-fascists are joined in the program with America's foremost class-war prisoner, Mumia Abu-Jamal, American Indian Movement leader Leonard Peltier, radical lawyer Lynne Stewart, former Black Panther supporters Mondo we Langa and Ed Poindexter and imprisoned members of the Philadelphia MOVE commune.

We urge *WV* readers to contribute to the stipend program by sending checks payable to the PDC and earmarked "prisoners stipends fund" to: PDC, P.O. Box 99, Canal St. Station, New York, NY 10013-0099. Letters to the Tinley Park Five can be sent to: Alex Stuck M34020, 2600 N. Brinton Avenue, Dixon, IL 61021; Cody Sutherlin M34021, 13423 E. 1150th Avenue, Robinson, IL 62454; Dylan Sutherlin M34022, P.O. Box 7711, Centralia, IL 62801; Jason Sutherlin M34023, 100 Hillcrest Rd., East Moline, IL 61244; John Tucker M34024, P.O. Box 900, Taylorville, IL 62568. ■

Labour Party Paved Way for Tory Privatizations

Britain: Nationalized Health Care Under Attack

The following article is reprinted from Workers Hammer *No. 222 (Spring 2013), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain, section of the International Communist League.*

WORKERS HAMMER

The Health and Social Care Act which takes effect on 1 April amounts to the biggest shake-up of the National Health Service [NHS] in England since its foundation. For the first time since 1948, the government will no longer be obligated by law to provide universal healthcare. In place of a "duty to provide" this fundamental social service, the government now has a "duty to promote" it—an innocuous-sounding change in language meant to obscure a fundamental shift towards the private sector. After the Act was passed by Parliament, Dr. Jacky Davis, co-chair of the NHS Consultants' Association, said "we no longer have a national health service."

Among the most controversial provisions of the new legislation are the clinical commissioning groups (CCGs), which will control the lion's share of the NHS budget—roughly £65 billion [$99 billion] out of some £100 billion this financial year. Ostensibly under the direction of GPs [general practitioners], CCGs will commission the provision of patient care, including by directing patients to private providers and refusing treatment that does not meet "reasonable requirements." A recent study by the *British Medical Journal* shows that, of the GPs who are running commissioning groups, one in three help run or hold shares in private healthcare firms. But in reality, most GPs have neither the time nor expertise to "commission" care, so this will be handled by private consultants such as the giant management consultancy firm McKinsey. Under the guise of giving GPs more responsibility, CCGs in fact are a gateway for the outflow of billions in NHS funds to private firms.

Government officials claim that NHS services will still be free at the point of use. But as political economist Colin Leys points out: "This is seriously misleading. They fail to add a key proviso—provided the service is still available on the NHS. In reality, a growing list of services will not be available, and so won't be free" (*Red Pepper*, April 2012). In fact this process has already begun. In 2006, Croydon Primary Care Trust put together a list of 34 procedures that need not be offered to patients, including surgery for cataracts, hips and knees, to save money. The "Croydon list" has quietly become widespread. People with non-life-threatening but painful or disabling conditions are told they must pay for treatment, if they can; otherwise, too bad. Some GPs are restricted in the number of referrals they can make in a week, no matter the needs of the patients they see. Referrals to specialists have been intercepted and denied by privately run "referral gateways." The U.S. health insurer UnitedHealth, for one, has been prominent in vetting and sometimes overturning GPs' judgments. And as more people are driven to the private sector for care, funds are leeched from the NHS, which threatens to become a dumping ground for the poor and chronically ill.

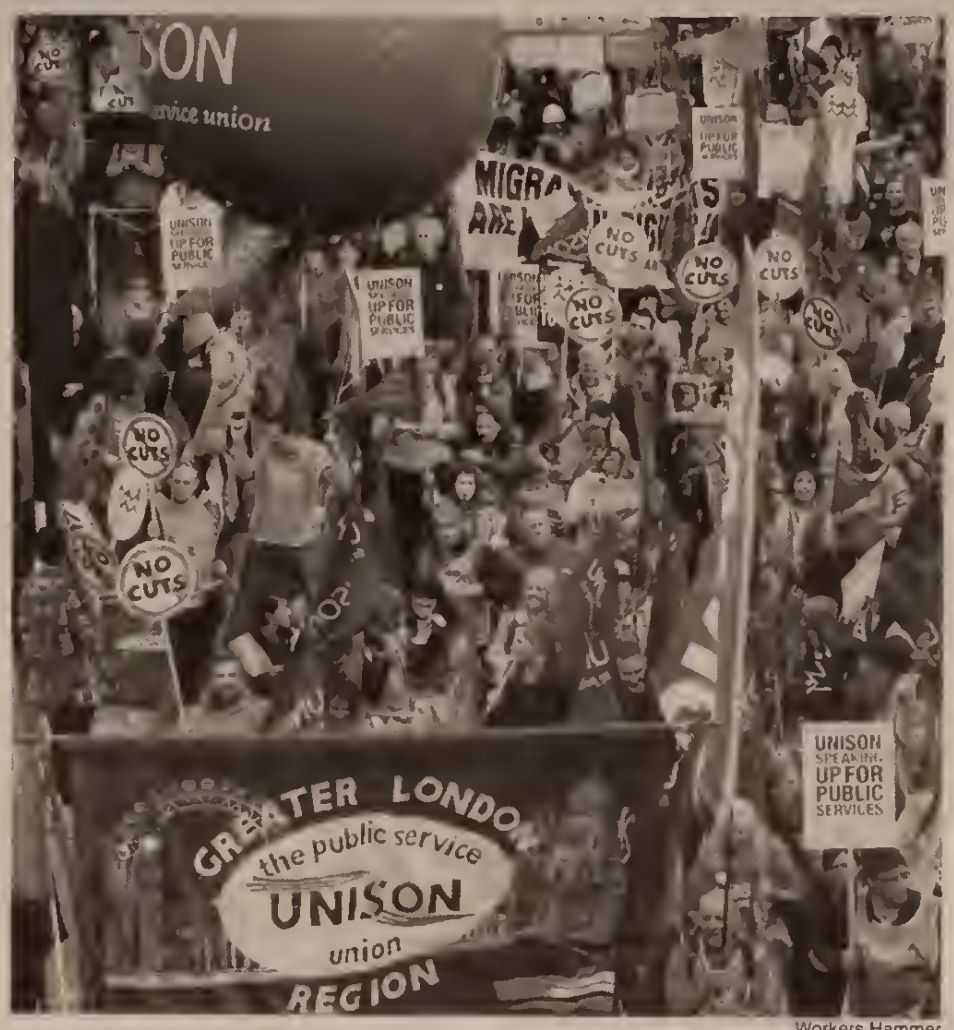
Working People Deserve Better!

Hospital closures are sweeping the country. A&E [emergency] and maternity wards are being shut, or downgraded as in the case of Lewisham Hospital in south London. Despite being financially solvent, Lewisham was targeted as part of a restructuring plan when the neighbouring South London Healthcare NHS Trust was taken into administration. That trust had been crippled by £60 million a year in debt repayment incurred as a result of Private Finance Initiatives (PFIs), under which public building projects are financed by private debt. The government aims to slash the healthcare budget by £20 billion by 2015, so for hospitals not faced with closure or downgrading, swingeing [severe] cuts are on the horizon. The Whittington Hospital in north London has announced cost-cutting plans that include making 570 staff redundant [laid off] and selling off several of its buildings to private bidders. There, consultants from former car parts company Unipart Group have been paid £500,000 so far to find savings.

In "The Great NHS Robbery" (opendemocracy.net, 31 January), science writer Marcus Chown explains: "Gradually, the government is starving the NHS of money. This is deliberate. As hospitals run out of money—and the exorbitant repayments on PFI deals are a major factor here—they become prey to takeovers by private companies." The takeover last year of Hinchingbrooke Hospital in Cambridgeshire, an NHS hospital facing closure, by private company Circle Holdings has been eyed as a blueprint for the future. Circle—owned by companies and investment funds registered in the British Virgin Islands, Jersey and the Cayman Islands—intends to make £311 million in savings, and is cutting jobs. Others positioned to profit from hospital privatisation are Virgin magnate Richard Branson and Harmoni, which already runs GP services in many areas.

Privatising healthcare is so deeply unpopular that government spokesmen bandy about terms like "patient choice" and use stultifying vagaries and a dizzying array of initials to obscure what they are doing. Many details of the Health and Social Care Act are still in dispute. Regulations that would have put virtually all NHS services out to tender had to be amended following an outcry. But following each retreat, the government has returned to the offensive. For the British bourgeoisie, the NHS presents an unwelcome overhead—not to mention the easy profits privatisation offers the financial speculators in the City. The interest of the capitalist class in the health of the population comes down to maintaining a workforce fit enough to exploit and soldiers to fight their wars and imperialist adventures. In times of social upheaval, the capitalists may shell out enough to placate the population, but they will always attempt to take those concessions back.

To put the immense wealth generated by the labour of working people at the service of human need will require the expropriation of the bourgeoisie through workers revolution and the establishment of a workers state. A collectivised planned economy will have to be built in order to guarantee not only healthcare but all the other fundamental requirements of life, including a good diet, decent housing, recreation and full employment. The fight to get there must begin with defending what we have now, as inadequate as it is—and the NHS has become a battleground. The solution does not lie in lobbying parliament or bringing Labour into office in the next election. Healthcare workers, who have borne a great burden of cuts, do have the potential and the interest to bring real power to this struggle. Their fight would win enormous support and do more than a million petitions. But it has been hamstrung by the union tops who set as their political agenda putting Labour in government. These misleaders accept that the working class must help to pay the cost of the capitalist crisis but imagine they could negotiate better terms from Ed Miliband's Labour Party.



Workers Hammer

20 October 2012: Health care workers and others at Trades Union Congress demonstration against austerity, London.

For Free, Quality Health Care for All!

Labour's Privatization of the NHS

When Labour's shadow health secretary Andy Burnham claimed the government was "trying to force through privatisation of the NHS by the back door," Tory health secretary Jeremy Hunt accused him of scare tactics. Labour has promised to repeal the Health and Social Care Act, but opening the NHS to huge corporate profits was Labour's policy long before the Con-Dem [Conservative-Liberal Democrats coalition] government came along. As Colin Leys and Stewart Player describe it: "The reality is that successive Labour health secretaries, working closely with the private sector, had already constructed almost the entire edifice of a healthcare market. The Tory plan merely speeds up the final stage and makes it more clearly visible" (*Red Pepper*, October 2010). Still, Leys concludes: "Unless Ed Miliband and Andy Burnham return to office and honour their prom-

Workers Hammer

January 26: Demonstrators at 15,000-strong London march against threatened closure of Lewisham Hospital emergency room and maternity wards.

Thatcher...

(continued from page 12)

that gamble paid off.

The coal miners strike of 1984-85 was the defining event of Thatcher's rule. The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) represented the most powerful and militant section of the working class. They had brought down Edward Heath's Conservative government in 1974, and Thatcher was out for revenge. She decided to destroy the NUM in order to bring the trade-union movement to heel, and she destroyed the mining industry to smash the NUM.

Thatcher's victory over the miners was not inevitable. The miners fought heroically against fierce state repression for 12 months. Their strike was supported by broad sections of the working class—there were plenty of examples of dockers and railway workers refusing to touch scab coal. But Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock obscenely echoed Thatcher, denouncing miners for "violence" on the picket lines against the strikebreaking cops. The leaders of some unions openly scabherded, while the "left" union leaders mouthed fine words but curbed the workers' militancy. In the final analysis, it was not the capitalist state that defeated the miners but the fifth column in the workers movement, including the left-talking leaders of the dockers union, who sent their striking members back to work twice during the miners strike.

We called on all unions to refuse to handle scab coal and for a fighting triple alliance of miners, dockers and railway workers to strike together. This would have amounted to a general strike, posing the question: who was going to start things up again? Which class would rule? It was this perspective the reformist Labour politicians and trade-union bureaucrats hated and feared above all. As our paper *Workers Hammer* (No. 67, March 1985) put it after the defeat of the strike:

> "The NUM leadership under Arthur Scargill took this strike about as far as it could go within a perspective of militant trade union reformism, and still it lost. Why? Because militancy alone is not enough. From day one it was clear that the NUM was up against the full power of the capitalist state. What was needed was a party of revolutionary activists rooted in the trade unions which fought tooth and nail to mobilise other unions in strike action alongside the NUM. But all Arthur Scargill had was the Labour Party, and it would rather see the NUM dead than organise to take on the bosses' state in struggle."

In 1983, on the eve of the miners strike, Scargill was witchhunted by the misleaders of the Trades Union Congress, aided by Gerry Healy's Workers Revolutionary Party, for telling the truth that imperialist-funded "free trade union" Solidarność in Poland was anti-socialist. The failure of any delegate to defend him signalled to Thatcher that Scargill was isolated and she could launch her attack. For Thatcher, the miners and other militant workers represented "the enemy within" while the Soviet Union and East European deformed workers states were the ultimate "enemy without." Polish Solidarność had a programme for capitalist counter-revolution. This is why, apart from the Union of Democratic Mineworkers who scabbed on the miners strike, it was the only "trade union" Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan ever liked.

Those trade-union bureaucrats who were the most anti-Soviet were also the most hostile to the miners strike. And the anti-Communist "socialists" like the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), whose devotion to capitalist "democracy" led them to support Solidarność, were far to the right of the majority of striking miners. The SWP had members in the steel plants who crossed miners' picket lines. When we exposed this at a public meeting, their founder-leader Tony Cliff bragged about how many and where! Workers Power and (retrospectively) the Socialist Party supported the scab ballot Thatcher and Kinnock were trying to force on the NUM, with workers already on strike supposed to hold a strike vote. The miners had voted with their feet; their weapon was not the bourgeoisie's strike laws but the picket line!

As for Lech Walesa, the leader of Solidarność, during the strike he took a stand on behalf of his imperialist patrons, praising Thatcher as a "wise and brave woman" in the *Sunday Mirror* under the headline "Why Scargill Is Wrong—by Lech." Walesa came to Thatcher's funeral to pay homage with other Cold Warriors like Henry Kissinger. (Scargill, on the other hand, lay low, reportedly responding laconically to a friend's text of the news "Thatcher dead": "Scargill alive.")

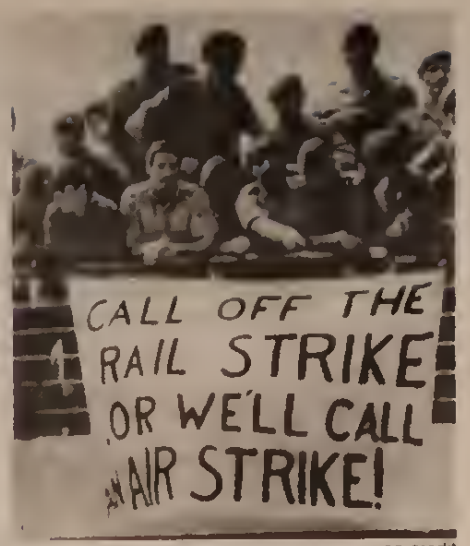
Baroness Bigot

During the miners strike, you saw how various minorities got behind the miners. They saw a powerful working-class struggle taking on their common oppressor: the Thatcher government and her brutal cops. Blacks, Asians, gays, Irish Republicans and Catholics championed the miners and gave them material assistance. In turn, the miners came to the defence of oppressed minorities, championing their cause even after the strike: participating in gay rights marches, for example. The miners were predominantly white and from rural areas, but the strike radicalised them. Many miners would say that before the strike they never knew what it was like to be black or Asian, or to be Catholic in Northern Ireland. After they had been on the receiving end of the cops' violence, they could relate to that oppression.

The miners strike also impacted broader layers of the working class. In 1984, when the IRA set off a bomb at the Tory conference, a common joke was that the culprits should be shot because they missed Thatcher. A worker at a car plant in Birmingham quipped that the police had better get started rounding up suspects because there were 50 million of them. Ten years earlier, Irish workers had been physically driven out of this same plant after the criminal bombing of two city centre pubs was attributed to the IRA. During the strike, in the Catholic areas of Northern Ireland banners went up: "Victory to the Miners!" Large collections of food and money were taken up in Dublin. Irish trade unionists said they were repaying the miners for the support British workers gave them during the Dublin Lockout of 1913.

Thatcher personified the bourgeois onslaught against the working class and the oppressed overall. In 1981, Thatcher saw Bobby Sands and nine other Irish Republican hunger strikers die grisly deaths rather than discuss their demand to be treated as political prisoners. As support grew around the world for the men's heroic struggle, Thatcher intoned: "Crime is crime is crime. It is not political." Under Thatcher, British armed forces colluded with Loyalist death squads in the murder of Northern Irish Catholics, including Pat Finucane, a solicitor who defended Republican prisoners. As Lahour's Peter Mandelson recalls, when he became Northern Ireland Secretary in 1999 she advised him: "You can't trust the Irish, they are all liars."

Under Thatcher, the black and Asian youth whose parents had come to Britain in times of labour shortages were treated as a surplus population, left to rot in areas deprived of resources. They were at the mercy of racist cops that she spurred on.



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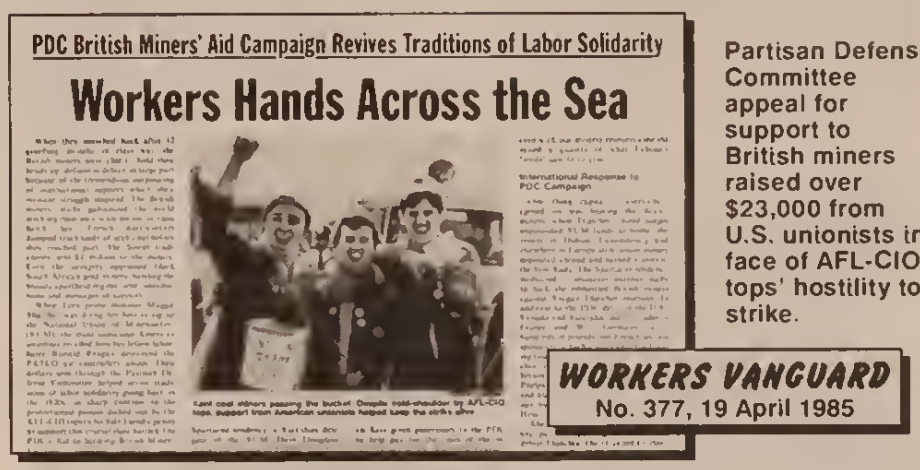
British victory in Falklands/Malvinas war fueled attacks on unions at home, as returning troops threatened to break 1982 rail workers strike.

The Brixton police riots of 1981 and 1985 are hallmarks of the Thatcher years, when blacks who tried to protest police brutality were attacked by police and denounced by Thatcher as "criminal, criminal."

Among the more nauseating claims about Thatcher is that by triumphing in the male-dominated world of bourgeois politics she struck a blow for women's equality. Thatcher was a dedicated *enemy* of women's liberation. She attacked single mothers and unashamedly campaigned to restore Victorian values. She openly maligned gays and managed to enact Section 28, the first anti-gay legislation in over 100 years, which prevented the "promotion" of homosexuality by school and local authorities. Moreover, the triumph of movements she supported internationally—such as the reactionary *mujahedin* in Afghanistan and capitalist counter-revolution in the Soviet Union and East Europe—came at the cost of women in particular.

Thatcher spearheaded the British capitalists' reactionary campaigns. But some credit for the dismal situation of the trade unions in Britain today must be given to the "old Labour" misleaders who isolated struggles, disarmed militant workers and supported the drive for capitalist counter-revolution in the East. When asked what her greatest achievement was, Thatcher reportedly answered "Tony Blair and New Labour." And under Tony Blair the Lahour Party earned its claim to the Iron Lady's legacy, trampling on the working class and gutting social services. Working people need a party that will fight for our own class interests, a workers party committed to sweeping away the bankrupt capitalist system. But we'll take what comfort this deeply unjust world has to offer. Eighty-seven years old, her last days spent in a suite at the Ritz: it's not exactly Mussolini's end. Nevertheless, we are glad to see the last of this exceptionally vile representative of the capitalist class, and finally be able to "tramp the dirt down." ■


PDC British Miners' Aid Campaign Revives Traditions of Labor Solidarity

Workers Hands Across the Sea

International Response to PDC Campaign

Partisan Defense Committee appeal for support to British miners raised over $23,000 from U.S. unionists in face of AFL-CIO tops' hostility to strike.

WORKERS VANGUARD
No. 377, 19 April 1985

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ises to repeal the Health and Social Care Act we must be prepared to see more and more of our healthcare, including hospital care, provided by for-profit corporations, with the rise in cost and loss of quality that invariably follows" (*Guardian*, 16 January). Talk about persistent illusions in Labour! Everything Leys documents points to the fact that, should Labour win the next election, they will carry out essentially the same privatising policies as the Tories...only under a different name.

The policy of deliberately forming an "internal market" inside the NHS, hatched in the 1980s under Thatcher, came to life under the Blair government. Under Blair and Brown, NHS trusts were gradually transformed into "foundation trusts" borrowing on the financial market, entering joint enterprises with private companies and setting their own terms of employment. If a foundation trust lost money, it would be closed or taken over. Mid Staffordshire NHS hospital trust cut £10 million from its budget in 2006-07 in order to gain foundation status. In a horror story worthy of a Victorian poorhouse, somewhere between 400 and 1,200 people needlessly died in Stafford Hospital between 2005 and March 2009, many of them denied pain medication, some left without being washed for up to a month. Feeding was left to family members, but many went hungry. Labour in office refused persistent demands from relatives for a public inquiry. One was conducted under the Con-Dem government, now cynically using the catastrophe to bolster support for its NHS agenda.

Labour oversaw the creation of "Independent Sector Treatment Centres"—private institutions—to perform low-risk elective surgery. These reduced waiting times for potentially life-transforming procedures like hip replacements (a procedure pioneered, in fact, by the NHS), but they guaranteed a minimum income for private companies. Millions of pounds of NHS cash has been paid for procedures that were never carried out. The Blair government also created the "Extended Choice Network," allowing private centres to treat NHS patients for a handsome sum. In both cases, private institutions were free to choose the patients that would earn them the most money, while NHS hospitals struggled with debts, cut staff and services, and were threatened with closure if they failed to prove financial "viability."

Labour in government was also responsible for the phenomenal growth of Private Finance Initiatives throughout the public sector. PFIs allow governments to borrow massive sums while keeping the debt "off balance sheet." Begun under the Tories in 1992, under Labour PFIs became about the only way of financing the building of new hospitals and schools. PFIs turn public funds into a cash cow for construction giants like Balfour Beatty as well as for global moneylenders. Though sometimes described as "one hospital for the price of two," in fact PFIs are not even that—extortionate payments are made for a facility which may never belong to the public sector. Today the NHS owes £65 billion for PFI loans; payments on loans and interest are rising at about 18 per cent each year and can be more than 10 per cent of a hospital trust's yearly intake. We can thank Labour for this.

What's needed is a new leadership of the working class dedicated to the overthrow of the capitalist order. To halt the privatisation drive, a class-struggle leadership would mobilise the healthcare unions around a series of immediate demands, including the return of the privatised hospitals and other health facilities to the public sector and cancellation of the PFI debt. McKinsey, Circle, Harmoni, Richard Branson's multifarious enterprises and the other capitalist vultures based in the City of London must be driven out of every section of the NHS that has been hived off to them! A revolutionary workers party would fight for the expropriation of the private healthcare, insurance and drug companies, and for free, quality healthcare for all, as part of the struggle for socialist revolution.

Union Bureaucrats: Cold Showers and Hot Air

Hospitals shut. Health workers made redundant. Nurses worked to death in

continued on page 8

Health Care...

(continued from page 7)

understaffed wards, then vilified by the government for "failing to provide quality compassionate care." It could not be clearer that it is necessary to fight. Despite its shortcomings, the NHS is one of the most significant gains working people won from British capitalism and they want passionately to defend it. Angry mass protests against hospital closures have erupted around the country. But they have been channelled into the dead end of lobbying parliament, with politicians of all stripes campaigning from the speakers platform and local council members, celebrities and the likes of the Socialist Workers Party's People Before Profit initiative setting the ultimate goal of electing a Labour government.

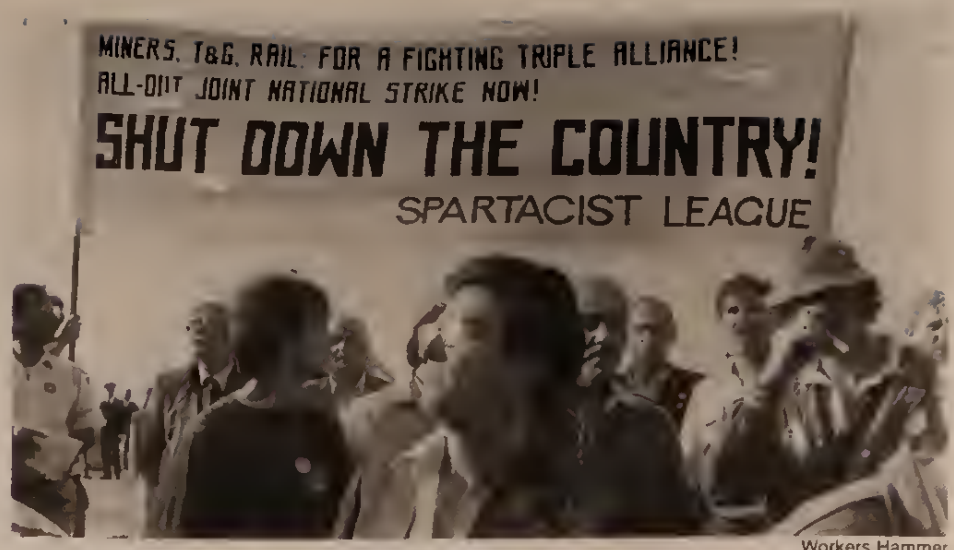
Hospital workers have come out to protest as individuals while their union misleaders act as though they are merely part of the "community," not the force with the potential to transform the situation. Unison, the largest union in the NHS with 400,000 healthcare workers, proclaims on its website: "UNISON led the campaign against the Health and Social Care Bill, and we will never stop fighting to defend and improve our NHS." How do the leaders propose doing that? "UNISON members have a very direct way of getting their message across to politicians—through political lobbying." The leaders of the other main health service union, Unite, appeal for members to email Cameron and their local MPs [Members of Parliament].

When strikes do break out, such as recently in West Yorkshire, they are left isolated. There some 500 medical secretaries and receptionists struck repeatedly against Mid Yorkshire Hospitals Trust's attempts to lay them off and rehire them at lower pay. Support poured in from patients, other hospital workers and unions around the country who rightly understood that this struggle was in the frontlines of the battle to defend public healthcare. The Unison leadership hinted they would ballot the rest of the union branch as the secretaries returned to work at the beginning of February. Some two months later, they are still equivocating. Unison national executive council member Paul Holmes told a strike rally in February: "This is the biggest dispute in the health services and every health trust in the country is watching you. And if you lose, they are all going to cut wages, too." He's right—but did he and the other union bureaucrats ever call out their other members?

The public sector union leaderships limit strikes to "days of action" a couple of times a year to blow off steam while wages and union protections are eroded. This is as true of "left" officials such as Mark Serwotka of the Public and Commercial Services (PCS) union as of the right-wingers. There have been many opportunities to launch a fight, not least the 30 November 2011 strike against attacks on public sector pensions. But as soon as the mass demonstration was over, then-TUC general secretary Brendan Barber and Dave Prentis, leader of Unison, called off any further action. Reflecting anger at the base, Unite members in the NHS (and local government) rejected the government's offer, as did the main civil service union, the PCS. The PCS called a one-day public sector protest strike of its own 270,000 members on Budget Day, 20 March. Rather than bemoaning the refusal of the likes of Prentis to organise joint strikes, a class-struggle leadership would go over their heads and appeal to the members of the other unions in the public sector to strike together.

The general secretary of Unite, "left" talking Len McCluskey, was prominent last autumn in touting a motion calling for the TUC to "continue leading from the front" with "far reaching campaigns including the consideration and practicalities of a general strike" against austerity. It speaks volumes about the trade-union bureaucracy that this motion was raised in the TUC by the Prison Officers Association. These thugs have no place in the workers movement! Yet they are embraced as "workers in uniform" by the Socialist Party and trade-union misleaders, including in the PCS, which grotesquely includes immigration cops.

At the huge 20 October 2012 TUC demonstration—held on a Saturday—many workers cheered those, like McCluskey, who mouthed off about a general strike from the platform. Joint class struggle by all the major unions is desperately needed—but this is far from the intention of the trade-union tops. Nearly six months on, predictably, the motion is a dead letter. The Socialist Party, which is in the leadership of the PCS, has not let the passage of six months diminish their touching optimism that the TUC will "name the day" for a 24-hour general strike. For these ostensible socialists, the perspective is back-handed support to Labour: "A 24-hour general strike, with more action planned to follow, could split the coalition government apart and lead to a general election" (*Socialist*, 21 November 2012). "Kick out the Tories" is likewise the perspective offered by the Unite bureaucracy. Under the title "Save our NHS" their website says: "In two years the country goes back to the polls. Help us make sure that the party that saves the NHS is the party that wins."



Workers Hammer

Spartacist League/Britain banner during 1984-85 miners strike.

The Old Labour "Spirit of '45"

At its founding in 1948, the NHS famously promised universal healthcare, free to everyone at the point of delivery. With the health service and a national system of benefits, people were to be taken care of "from the cradle to the grave." A new Ken Loach film, *The Spirit of '45*, speaks powerfully to the impact the NHS made on the lives of working people, some of whom recall the horrors of life before the NHS—families unable to pay for the doctor to visit sick children; the needless death of a mother due to infection after childbirth; the debt collectors coming on Fridays to demand money for doctors' bills. Loach eulogises the Labour government led by Clement Attlee that took office following a landslide victory in the 1945 election and then introduced the NHS.

British capitalism emerged from World War II with its empire in a state of disintegration and large chunks of the economy bankrupt. A wave of working-class militancy was sweeping Europe. Despite its deformation under the rule of the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy, the Soviet Union, and by extension the mass Communist parties in the capitalist world, had enormous authority for having borne the brunt of the fighting to defeat the Nazi armies. Within a few years, capitalism was overturned in many of the countries in Eastern Europe that remained under Soviet military control. West European governments began to expand social programmes both to appease class struggle and to counteract the influence of the Soviet Union. As Tory MP Quintin Hogg put it in 1943: "If you don't give the people social reform, they will give you social revolution." In this context, the British capitalist class grudgingly acceded to the establishment of the NHS—on a plan drawn up by William Beveridge, a Liberal economist, during the war.

Yevgeni Khaldei

Soviet soldiers raise red flag over Berlin's Reichstag, 1945. Following WWII, European capitalists enacted series of reforms to head off class struggle, counteract influence of USSR among workers.

Labour in office remained committed to administering British capitalism. The postwar nationalisations amounted to a gigantic bailout of the bourgeoisie. Loach's film does not show it, but the Attlee government called out troops against dockers on strike in 1945—as any other capitalist government would. A willing servant of British imperialism, it also helped to found NATO, sent troops to fight against the North Korean and Chinese deformed workers states, fought a dirty colonial war in Malaya and presided over the bloody partition of India. Attacks on the benefits provided by the NHS began in 1952 when charges for prescriptions and spectacles were introduced to help finance the war in Korea.

Even at its best, the NHS did not provide adequate care for the needs of the population. In the 1950s, Marxist scientist J.D. Bernal captured its shortcomings:

> "It is still a health service in name rather than in fact. Defence of national interests has seen to it that Britain has built few new hospitals and health centres since the end of the war. For the most part the National Health Service still depends on the old surgeries, where overworked doctors dispense ineffective drugs to queues of patients, and give them advice that they cannot take."
>
> —*Science in History*, Volume III (1954)

One of the more grotesque aspects of capitalism is that life itself—the number of years a person can expect to live and enjoy good health—inevitably comes down in good part to what social class he belongs to. In the poorer parts of Merseyside, where male life expectancy is 67, men are typically incapacitated by some kind of disability at age 44; in the richer parts of west London those numbers are 89 and 74. A male resident of Kensington or Chelsea can expect to live more than 14 years longer than his counterpart in Glasgow. Within the capital alone—the most unequal city in the developed world, according to Danny Dorling's book *Injustice: Why Social Inequality Persists*—it's said that for every stop on the Jubilee Line towards east London, life expectancy drops by a year.

Capitalism: Bad for Your Health!

In the 1990s, following the counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the bourgeoisies of Western Europe made a push to dismantle what remained of the social welfare programmes instituted after World War II. Now those attacks are being redoubled, driven by the capitalists' need to compete in a global market that is in profound crisis. Although we Marxists do not share social-democratic illusions in nationalisation schemes, we strongly support workers' defensive struggles against privatisation which in practice amounts to nothing less than savage union-busting attacks on workers' jobs and living standards.

For many working people in Britain, life is reaching the breaking point. The standard of living is dropping for the fifth straight year. The chasm between rich and poor is widening. Nearly half a million have been on the dole for a year or more, while those "lucky" enough to have jobs are expected to meekly accept stagnant or slashed wages, increased pension costs and overwork. Nationally agreed pay and working conditions for health

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workers are replaced by local agreements and "performance-related pay." Jobs are slashed in manufacturing and retail industries, workers are dumped on the street. And the relative absence of any serious union fight-back against the attacks by this government—and Labour governments before it—has emboldened the capitalist rulers to keep coming back for more austerity.

The defeat of the miners strike in 1984-85 was pivotal in turning the tide against the working class. Thatcher provoked the strike, aiming to destroy the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) which had been the militant backbone of the proletariat in Britain for decades, as she began to shut down the entire coal-mining industry. The TUC was overtly hostile to the strike, and the Labour Party leadership under Neil Kinnock condemned the NUM as it battled the full force of the capitalist state. From the TUC "lefts" there came plenty of hot air and even more backroom sabotage. Had the railways and dockers unions struck alongside the miners, they could have shut down the country and achieved a historic victory for the working class. But the "leaders" of these unions were not willing to take on the government. Their perspective was limited to replacing the Tories with Labour, and Labour was committed to strikebreaking. The miners held out for twelve months but were isolated and defeated. Arthur Scargill took the miners strike about as far as it could go within a perspective of militant trade unionism, but never broke from his Labourite political perspective.

The lesson that the trade-union misleadership draws from this defeat—that it is not possible to fight—only underscores the need to build a new union leadership, not of Labour toadies overawed by parliament, but of workers leaders who rely on the social power of their own class and are committed to win what working people need, not what the bosses say is possible. The NHS relies heavily on agency workers. The unions must demand full union wages and working conditions for them and organise the unorganised. Particularly in the NHS, where immigrant workers have been a key component of the workforce from the outset, it is necessary for the unions to fight in defence of immigrant rights, including free access to healthcare. It is also necessary to address the needs of the many women workers, demanding equal pay, childcare and protection against discrimination.

Freedom of Information Act requests on PFIs have been rejected under the banner of commercial confidentiality, concealing the complex web of schemes British working people are paying for. We demand the government open the books on these backroom deals between the entrepreneurs, financial speculators and their government cronies. The working class has a right, as revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky insisted, "to determine the actual share of the national income appropriated by individual capitalists and by the exploiters as a whole; to expose the behind-the-scenes deals and swindles of banks and trusts; finally, to reveal to all members of society that unconscionable squandering of human labour which is the result of capitalist anarchy and the naked pursuit of profits" (*The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*, 1938).

No matter which party is in government, capitalism means squeezing workers and boosting profits. Contrary to the dreams of reformists, the point is not to turn the clock back to the days of Old Labour, but to shatter the rotten capitalist order which has driven the working people into the ground and replace it with a workers government dedicated to building a socialist society. For this workers need a revolutionary party, not insipid reformists like the Socialist Party or Socialist Workers Party that tail the union bureaucracy and haggle over just how much austerity the working class should accept. As our comrades in the Spartacist League/U.S. wrote:

> "Health means much more than shots and pills and surgical knives: it is a decent place to live; plenty of good food to eat; knowledge of human biology; air clean of pollution; safe, decent working conditions; the principles of public health rigorously applied. Medicine can't save lives ruined by poverty and malnutrition....
>
> "When we have thrown out the vicious capitalist system which sells human life for dollars, we will be able to build a new socialist society where human life, human worth and human dignity count. Doctors will be servants of the people; hospitals will be havens to heal the sick; research on vaccinations, new medical techniques and improved drugs will be internationally coordinated and to the benefit of all. When the workers of the world are in charge of this planet, the only limits of human health will be scientific—and these will be constantly enlarged by thoughtful, energetic research."
>
> —*Women and Revolution* No. 39, Summer 1991 ■

Right: Labour cabinet minister Ernest Bevin (left) and Prime Minister Clement Attlee, August 1945. Below: British soldiers patrolling streets of Calcutta in colonial India, 1946.

AP; Popperfoto (inset)

Young Spartacus

City College...

(continued from page 3)

some access to the UC system for blacks and other minority youth. But these programs have been destroyed. California was in the vanguard of the campaign to roll back affirmative action. Moreover, poor, black and working-class youth were increasingly priced out of the UC market as tuition skyrocketed. The bourgeoisie increasingly considers the masses of black people in the inner cities as a "surplus population," no longer needed as a reserve army of labor and thus not "worth" providing with even the basic means of survival, much less education.

As we wrote in early 2010, at a time of massive student and campus worker protests against tuition hikes, education cuts and job-slashing attacks:

> "We think everyone should have access to the same quality education available to the sons and daughters of the bourgeoisie. We call to nationalize the private universities and for a state-paid living stipend so working people and the poor can attend. We demand the expansion of remedial programs for students relegated to inner-city public schools, an end to the racist 'tracking' system in the high schools and their genuine integration, including through the aggressive implementation of busing. Whether this is possible or not is in reality determined by the outcome of class and social struggle. Under capitalism, gains wrested from the ruling class through social struggle are limited and reversible. As communists, our goal is not what is possible within the framework of capitalist society, but the revolutionary overthrow of capitalist class rule and the establishment of a workers state as a transition to the construction of a classless, egalitarian society where scarcity has been eliminated and education is the right of all."
>
> —"Protests Against Education Cuts and Fee Hikes Sweep California," *WV* No. 950, 15 January 2010

The Dead End of Pressure Politics

Reformist "socialists" perennially peddle the lie that capitalism can be reformed to serve the interests of the working class and oppressed. To this end, Socialist Organizer even offers budgetary advice to the bourgeoisie. In a leaflet titled "Don't Let the 1% Dismantle CCSF," which was distributed at a March 14 protest at SF City Hall, S.O. opines:

> "They tell us that there is no money, so we have to cut back or they will close our school. They are lying. There are many obvious solutions to CCSF's and California's financial woes: taxing the rich, taxing oil extraction, cutting prison and war funding, and/or amending Prop 13. ***Cuts are not inevitable. The school and the state is*** [sic] ***facing a priorities crisis—not a budget crisis***" (emphasis in original).

The only "priority" for the bourgeoisie is the maintenance of their class rule and the protection and expansion of their global imperialist interests. That will not change short of socialist revolution. S.O. stops short of even the utopian call that reformists often raise for the capitalist rulers to end imperialist war. They simply and explicitly accept the capitalist machinery of repression, only urging that less money be spent on maintaining the prisons and subjugating peoples around the world.

At the same time, S.O. can talk out of the left side of its mouth, making a nod in its leaflet to mobilizing the power of organized labor and even writing that this "requires breaking labor's subordination to the Democratic Party." They acknowledge that "winning free, quality public education for all...requires eliminating capitalism and replacing it with a socialist society." But this is window-dressing for their work on the ground as leaders of the Save CCSF Coalition.

From the podium at the March 14 rally, the speech by S.O.'s Eric Blanc had not a scintilla of "socialism." He complained, "Unfortunately, the politicians have remained silent up until this moment," adding that "when our school is under attack, the responsibility of the people who are elected from this city is to save our school, not dismantle it." Indeed, a core demand of the Coalition is that "San Francisco's elected representatives must step in" as allies providing funds and political support to the fight to save CCSF. S.O. & Co. appeal to Mayor Ed Lee and the Democratic-controlled city administration—the same capitalist politicians cutting the wages, benefits and pensions of city workers, including members of SEIU Local 1021, which also represents CCSF clerical employees.

Thus, like the trade-union bureaucracy, which has long subordinated labor to the Democratic Party, S.O. serves to channel the protests into the bourgeois electoral shell game. The idea that the Democrats—the other party of American capitalist rule—are the allies of the working class and poor has long served as a key prop for maintaining the system of racist U.S. imperialism.

As the youth auxiliary to the Marxist Spartacist League, the purpose of the Spartacus Youth Clubs is to win a new generation of students and youth to the fight to build a revolutionary workers party. Only under the leadership of such a party can the working class realize its social power and historic interests as the gravediggers of this system of wage slavery, racial oppression, poverty and war. The working class must seize state power and reorganize society on an egalitarian socialist basis, providing for the needs of the many rather than the profits of a tiny class of exploiters. The essential precondition for human emancipation from starvation, exploitation, ignorance and inequality is a planned, socialized economy on a global scale. Only in this way can the accumulated knowledge and culture of civilization be truly appropriated by those who are today deprived of the right to quality education. ■

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Boston...

(continued from page 1)

by plastering their photos on its front page.

Giving the anti-Muslim scare a more "respectable" gloss, the *New York Times* (April 20) quoted an "expert" who evoked the "divided loyalties" of Americans who turn to *jihad*. The question, he said, is "are you American first or are you Muslim first?" The not-so-subtle message is that Muslim Americans represent a potential fifth column, a disloyal and dangerous "enemy within." To deal with such elements, the state has at its disposal a vastly increased arsenal of repressive powers put in place as part of the imperialists' "war on terror."

In a virtual state of martial law, the entire Boston metropolitan area was placed under lockdown for a full day. The Massachusetts governor's order that all residents remain at home with their doors locked was unprecedented for a major American city. Residents watched as hundreds of National Guardsmen in full battle gear and SWAT teams backed up by military helicopters and armored personnel carriers sealed off streets and carried out house-to-house searches. All to track down the wounded, unarmed, 19-year-old suspect Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, who could not show his face in public after the massive media exposure.

A resident of Watertown, where the search was centered, told reporters: "Now I know what it must be like to be in a war zone like Iraq or Afghanistan." If this were Baghdad, the number of those killed and maimed at the marathon would be a small toll for a normal day. Toward the end of April, 215 people were killed over a five-day period in Iraq due to bombings and clashes between Sunnis and Shi'ites.

Once a cultural center of the Near East, Iraq was starved for over a decade by United Nations sanctions that led to the deaths of some 1.5 million people. Those sanctions pulverized Iraq in the lead-up to the U.S. imperialist war and occupation, which completed the country's destruction. Launched in the name of fighting terror and bringing democracy to Iraq, the war has left behind a country torn and bloodied by intercommunal killings and terror bombings. The U.S. bourgeoisie hypocritically celebrates the resilience and dignity of Bostonians—as if the capitalists gave a damn about the well-being of the working people. But the resilience and dignity of Iraqis trying to go about their lives, when every trip to school, work or the market can be a death sentence, goes unnoticed in this country's capitalist media.

Reuters

April 19: Virtual martial law in Boston area as National Guard and SWAT teams sealed off Watertown streets for house-to-house searches.

Reuters

April 16: Residents of working-class Dorchester section of Boston at vigil for Martin Richard, eight-year-old victim of marathon bombing.

In self-serving reaction to the Boston bombing, the American rulers and their mouthpieces in the press ask: Why do "they" hate us? From Iraq to Afghanistan and beyond, the U.S. military has unleashed staggering levels of deadly terror in the name of the "war on terror." In what is an almost routine event, special forces in eastern Afghanistan searching for an alleged Taliban militant blew up his home on April 6, killing 18 people, including at least ten children. In February, a NATO airstrike in the same area killed ten civilians, including five women and four children. Several thousand people have been massacred in missile strikes from unmanned U.S. drones in Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia. Whether or not Tamerlan and Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, the alleged Boston bombers, were motivated by opposition to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, as has been reported, there is no doubt that the cycle of U.S. military mayhem is helping to generate an endless stream of people who hate America, and, in some cases, Americans.

On an immensely greater scale than the Boston bombing, the perpetrators of the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center also took aim at everyday people—native-born and immigrant, black and white, well-heeled and not. Their reactionary mind-set equated the U.S. populace with its capitalist rulers. This is the same equation made by the U.S. rulers themselves in promoting the "unity" of all Americans while grinding the working class, black people and the poor into the ground and taking an ax to basic democratic rights.

With their barrage of announcements that Dzhokhar Tsarnaev would be questioned without being read his *Miranda* warning, police and government spokesmen tried to hammer people into meekly accepting that the right to remain silent and to have a lawyer present during interrogation can be suspended for "emergencies." During the Ronald Reagan presidency, the Supreme Court cut back *Miranda* protections when police cite "public safety" concerns. This "exception" was invoked in interrogating the suspects in the Christmas 2009 "underwear bomber" incident and the 2010 attempted bombing in Times Square. In 2010, the Obama administration moved to sweep away *Miranda* rights altogether in purported terrorism cases. A Justice Department memorandum instructed federal agents to dispense with *Miranda* simply if they feel it necessary, even if there is not "any immediate threat."

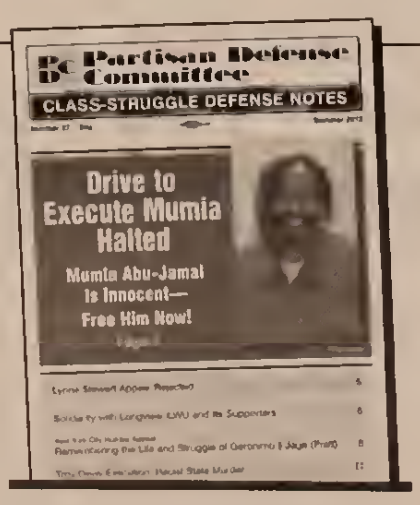
When Republican Senators John McCain and Lindsey Graham demanded that Dzhokhar Tsarnaev be declared an "enemy combatant," and therefore subject to indefinite detention without any legal rights, Obama sanctimoniously announced that this would not be necessary, as the civilian courts would suffice. With Tsarnaev's conviction on any charge all but a certainty, Obama thus got to engage in cheap posturing as standing above the machinations of the Bush White House, which so stained the "democratic" facade of American imperialism. This brought no solace to desperate Guantánamo inmates who continue their hunger strike, demanding an end to their torturous indefinite detention. As for the charge that Tsarnaev used a "weapon of mass destruction," this comes from the Commander-in-Chief of the only country to have ever used atomic weapons, incinerating 200,000 Japanese civilians in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

In a further threat to civil liberties, the Boston bombing has triggered widespread calls from bourgeois politicians and newspaper editorialists for increased deployment of surveillance cameras. In Chicago, cops already have access to an estimated 15,000 surveillance cameras, with the city aiming to install a camera "on every corner." In New York, Mayor Bloomberg announced on April 25 that the city is developing a computer system that will analyze data captured by some 6,000 cameras that have already been installed. He warned NYC residents: "You're never going to know where all of our cameras are." And both Republicans and Democrats have bills pending in Congress that would encourage the use of drones to spy on the U.S. population.

Although nothing was known of the Tsarnaev brothers' motives—or whether they even had any—they were immediately declared "terrorists." Basically, "terrorism" is whatever the capitalist rulers and their security forces declare it to be, as when they went after the Black Panther Party in the 1960s and early '70s. A century ago, unions were outlawed as "criminal conspiracies." Would the West Virginia miners on strike in 1977-78, who defended their picket lines arms in hand, be designated today as "terrorists"? One way that Obama has broadened the sweep of the "war on terror" initiated under Bush has been to victimize leftist political activists (see "Defend the NATO 3!" page 5).

Well aware that galloping inequality—greatly deepened by the global economic crisis—is increasing social tensions that sow the seeds of class struggle, the rulers are eager to use the panoply of "anti-terror" measures to strengthen the repressive apparatus of the capitalist state against the working class and the oppressed. This may not be evident today in the absence of any massive social or class struggle and with a sellout labor "leadership" that is beholden to the capitalist profit system and loyally backs the interests of U.S. imperialism. But what must be understood nevertheless is that the government's drive to roll back civil liberties and regiment the population is ultimately directed against the ability of working people to struggle in their own interests against the capitalist rulers.

The working class cannot advance its struggle against exploitation without also defending democratic rights and opposing every instance of imperialist barbarism carried out by its own ruling class. Our task is to forge a revolutionary workers party grounded in the Marxist understanding that the decaying capitalist system must be overthrown through socialist revolution. ■



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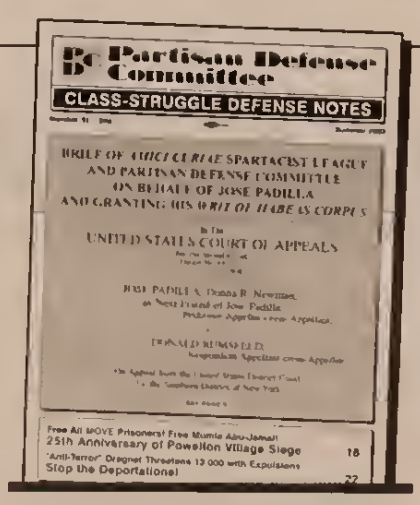

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Reuters

Afghan villagers mourn children killed by April 6 NATO airstrike in Kunar Province.

Wounded Knee...

(continued from page 4)

their hands of the remnants of the Native American population.

Denied the old world of the tribe, shattered forever, and the new world of capitalist society, whose doors were closed, Native Americans have borne the full brunt of a capitalist system that long ago entered its period of decay. V.I. Lenin insisted that the revolutionary Marxist party must act as a tribune of the people, and it is as such that we call for the return of the Wounded Knee Massacre site to the Oglala Sioux, whose blood was spilled in a vindictive U.S. war crime. Proletarian revolutionaries seek to sear into the collective memory of the working class and the oppressed the genocidal near-destruction of the Native peoples. Under workers rule, new generations will be instructed in the history of capitalist barbarism, smashed once and for all through victorious proletarian socialist revolution. As the youth group of the Spartacist League wrote in the concluding part of the *Young Spartacus* three-part series on "Marxism and the American Indian Question" (Nos. 27, 28 and 31; December 1974, January and April 1975):

> "Oppressed national and racial minorities throughout the world will look to the future workers state in this country to measure the commitment of the American proletariat to provide for the social emancipation and voluntary assimilation of Indians into society....
>
> "Indians represent a significant part of the historical development of mankind, and revolutionary socialists understand their cultural uniqueness and share a mutual interest in preserving aspects of the Indians' cultural heritage. This knowledge will help correct centuries of cultural erosion and social stagnation, to overcome the backwardness of reservation life and at the same time allow Indians, if they choose, to maintain their social identity."■

Matthew Williams

Squalor of Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, South Dakota, circa 2008.

Disasters...

(continued from page 1)

the worst disaster in the history of clothing manufacture. More than 1,200 other people were injured.

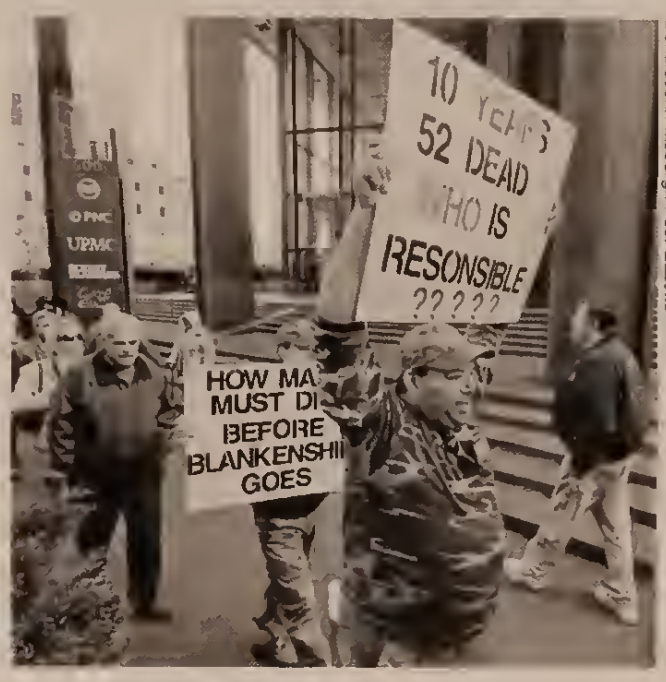
Mass protests erupted as news of the disaster spread, with hundreds of thousands of outraged workers walking out of plants in and around the capital city, Dhaka. Highways were blockaded and two factories whose bosses refused to shut down production were set ablaze. Protesters marched on the headquarters of the garment manufacturers association, chanting: "We want execution of the garment factory owners!" When police firing rubber bullets and tear gas could not quell the crowds, the industry announced on April 26 that all factories would be shut for the upcoming weekend. The Rana Plaza building owner was subsequently arrested trying to flee across the border into India.

The giant retailers who subcontract production to the Savar sweatshops—e.g., J.C. Penney, the French retailer Carrefour and the British Primark—expressed "shock" about the collapse and denied any complicity. But the depraved indifference exhibited by the capitalist magnates to the lives of those they exploit plumbs new depths when it comes to the semicolonial world, where the U.S. and other imperialist powers have imposed the most wretched conditions. The 5,000 factories in Bangladesh that produce garments for major U.S. and European brands are a cornerstone of the country's economy. The millions of workers toiling in near-slavery in these deathtraps are paid the lowest wages in the world for that industry—as low as $37 a month, far below subsistence, even after working 15-hour shifts.

The long trail of capitalist industrial murder in Bangladesh includes an earlier building collapse in Savar that left 73 workers dead and a fire at Tazreen Fashions in nearby Ashulia last November that took more than 100 lives. At Tazreen, a source for Wal-Mart and Sears, managers blocked the stairs to keep workers at their sewing machines even as flames spread on floors below. The truth of the matter is that the multinational corporations are calling the shots and are well aware of what it takes to produce clothing at the prices they contract for, aiming to squeeze out the maximum profit. If orders go unfilled, they pick up stakes and move elsewhere. The local bosses are simply the whip hands, lining their own pockets in the process. (For more on conditions in Bangladesh, see "Women Garment Workers Fight Starvation Wages," *WV* No. 974, 18 February 2011.)

To facilitate their many crimes, the garment bosses, aided by the government in Dhaka, brutally suppress unions, the only effective safeguard workers have against the rapaciousness of the capitalist profiteers. Trade unionists are banned from organizing in the factories and are frequent targets of arrest, torture and killing. A key organizer of the Bangladesh Center for Worker Solidarity, Aminul Islam, was murdered a year ago. As a result, labor unions are almost nonexistent in the garment plants; none of the Rana Plaza factories was unionized. Nevertheless, a number of strikes have swept the industry in recent years.

The industrial murder at Rana Plaza, and Tazreen Fashions before it, is a searing indictment of the daily workings of capitalist-imperialism. The situation cries out for union organizing drives—backed in action by the labor movement internationally—demanding decent wages and working conditions. These sweatshops are the first links in a "just-in-time" global cargo chain extending all the way to the retail stores in the imperialist countries, with key choke points at the ports and in the warehouses. Coordinated solidarity action could go a long way toward advancing the cause of labor in the semicolonial world and imperialist centers alike.



Donaldson/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Pittsburgh: United Mine Workers members protest Massey Energy's safety record, May 2010, one month after explosion in West Virginia mine killed 29 coal miners.

Organize the Unorganized!

The bosses have always rolled the dice with workers' lives, writing off the human toll as just another cost of doing business. The 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist fire in New York City caused the deaths of 146 garment workers, mainly young Jewish and Italian immigrant women who could not escape because the bosses had locked the doors to the stairwells to prevent unauthorized breaks (not unlike at Tazreen a century later). The atrocity galvanized the labor movement in the city and spurred the growth of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union. Today as well, industrial carnage like that in West, Texas, should be a clarion call to *organize the unorganized*.

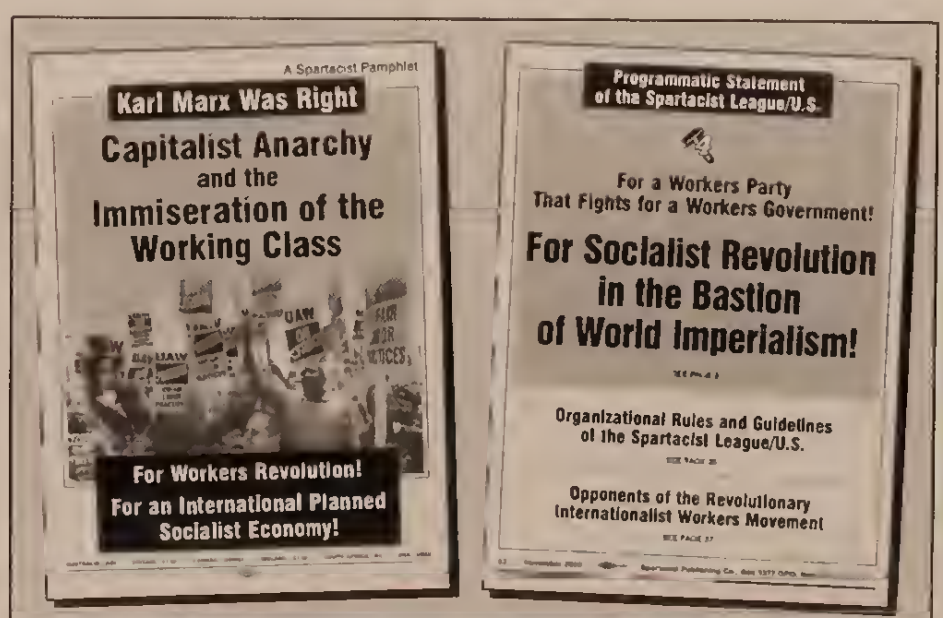
Texas, a "right to work" state with one of the lowest unionization rates in the country, had more fatal workplace accidents in 2011 than any other state. The only real measure of protection workers have against their cutthroat exploiters are strong unions with safety committees that can shut down dangerous operations on the spot. But in place of the kind of hard struggle required to organize unions, the class-collaborationist labor leadership relies on the good graces of the capitalist government, writing letters to Congress pleading for greater workplace regulation. This is the kind of impotent strategy the AFL-CIO tops roll out at their Workers Memorial Day events each April.

Falling in line behind the labor bureaucrats is the International Socialist Organization (ISO), which parrots their calls for beefing up OSHA (socialistworker.org, 23 April). Government agencies like OSHA do not exist to protect workers. OSHA's pretenses to enforcing safety are so much window dressing for business as usual. As David Barstow reported in the *New York Times* (22 December 2003): "When Congress established OSHA in 1970, it made it a misdemeanor to cause the death of a worker by willfully violating safety laws. The maximum sentence, six months in jail, is half the maximum for harassing a wild burro on federal lands."

The "compliance" history of West Fertilizer makes a mockery of claims that safety will be improved by reliance on the government. This non-union plant had a decades-long history of violations and petty fines for shady and unsafe practices. The facility lacked fire alarms, sprinklers, shut-off valves and blast walls. When OSHA last inspected the plant in 1985, it found five "serious" violations, for which West Fertilizer was fined all of *$30*!

The ISO blames the state of affairs at OSHA on "the neoliberal agenda" (i.e., the Republican Bush administration). What these reformists fail to mention is that the Democratic Clinton White House launched the "New OSHA" initiative that stressed "voluntary compliance" on the part of business, and that Obama has slashed spending for a number of workplace safety initiatives in next year's budget. No less than the Republicans, the Democrats are a party of the class enemy. Republicans make no bones about going after working people, but Democrats do the same thing while occasionally proclaiming themselves "friends of labor."

The U.S. capitalist rulers will try to do everything they can to increase profit margins, from busting unions and intensifying the exploitation of workers at home to exporting capital to countries where labor costs are cheaper. Against the chauvinist trade-union tops and their "America first" protectionism, we reiterate the call raised by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in the *Communist Manifesto* (1848): "Working men of all countries, unite!" It is through a series of proletarian revolutions that the working people of the planet can seize the bourgeois rulers' capital and build an internationally planned economy, lifting the masses of the semicolonial world from their miserable poverty and paving the way to a future of plenty for all. ■



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WORKERS VANGUARD

Margaret Thatcher Finally Dead

Iron Lady, Rust in Hell!

Reuters photos

Left: Margaret Thatcher's corpse carried away from funeral service in London, April 17. Right: April 8 celebration in George Square, Glasgow, following news of Thatcher's death.

The following presentation was given by comrade Olly Laing of the Spartacist League/Britain at a public class in London on April 17. It has been adapted for publication.

As everyone here will be only too well aware, it was Margaret Thatcher's funeral today: a publicly funded, pomp-filled ceremonious insult to working people in this country and beyond. Anyone close to central London was subjected to a salute to Thatcher by artillery used in the Falklands in 1982, in her dirty little war against Argentina's Galtieri dictatorship over windswept rocks in the South Atlantic. In that conflict, Thatcher earned the title "Butcher of the *Belgrano*" for a war crime: She ordered the sinking of the Argentine battleship *General Belgrano outside* Britain's own declared war zone, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of young Argentine conscripts.

The death of nobody but Thatcher could be celebrated by such a huge swath of the population in this country. Just look at the "death parties," as the bourgeois press termed them with horror, in Glasgow, Bristol, Brixton and Trafalgar Square. Think of the toasts raised in the pubs of former mining and industrial areas across northern England, Wales and Scotland and in the Catholic areas of Northern Ireland. Surely the outburst of jokes makes some new record, from "Thatcher's only been in hell half an hour and she's already closed down three furnaces" to the Scottish comedian Frankie Boyle's "I was all for a lavishly funded public cremation for Thatcher. Right up until she died." Government officials sniffed that the celebrations are "puerile" and grumbled that some of the participants are too young to remember Thatcher. So what? They know she's a big part of the reason there's no education, no jobs, no future for them. Capturing Thatcher's disdain for everything outside of that citadel of finance capital, the City of London, her biographer, Charles Moore, told Radio 5 that Thatcher was "reviled in parts of the country that are less important."

Reformists point to British society today as proof that Thatcherism didn't work: the devastation of the manufacturing base, insufficient and unaffordable housing, generations of unemployed and financial deregulation for the City. Well, Thatcherism did work for the capitalist class. This is why Thatcher is so celebrated, not only by the bourgeoisie's Conservative (Tory) Party but also by Labour Party leaders: Opposition leader Ed Miliband professed to "greatly respect her political achievements" while Tony Blair offered this "towering political figure" his sincerest form of flattery, noting that his own government retained "some of the changes she made in Britain."

Distancing himself from New Labour's fawning, maverick Member of Parliament George Galloway objected to "spending £10 million on the canonisation of this wicked woman," complaining: "The comparison of Margaret Thatcher with Mr. Churchill is utterly absurd. We'd be conducting this conversation in German if it was not for Mr. Churchill." Galloway's admiration for Churchill, a colonialist pig who engineered the starvation of millions of Bengalis during World War II, is based on the myth that WWII was a war for "democracy" against fascism. In fact, Churchill was defending the interests of British imperialism against its rivals, particularly Germany. Fundamentally it was the Soviet Red Army that smashed Hitler's military.

The capitalist media talk about how, before Thatcher came into office, Britain was "the sick man of Europe," crippled by strike waves and outdated industry. In fact, British industry had been in decline relative to its imperialist competitors such as the U.S. and Germany since the late 19th century. This was exacerbated by the loss of Britain's empire and near-bankruptcy following World War II. The bourgeoisie needed to increase their competitiveness on the world market, that is, to ratchet up the rate of exploitation of the working class. In the 1960s and '70s, the Labour governments of Harold Wilson and James Callaghan tried to do this by cutting deals with the union tops over beer and sandwiches, through wage controls, strike ballots and a ban on secondary picketing, and when that failed by mobilising the police and army against striking workers.

During this period, miners, railwaymen, dockers and others waged strikes that shook the country, led by a powerful and militant shop stewards movement. However, while trade-union militancy was able to frustrate the capitalist system, it could not resolve the underlying conflict. There were two alternatives in the long term: either the bourgeoisie would be dealt with by workers revolution or the workers would be dealt with by the bourgeoisie. As it happened, the class struggle was derailed into electing a Labour government. When Callaghan's Labour government proved unable to deliver for them, the bourgeoisie turned to Thatcher.

Anti-Union, Anti-Soviet Crusader for the Bourgeoisie

By 1990, after eleven bitter years of confrontation, Thatcher would be ousted by her own party as protests against the poll tax swept the country. In Scotland, where the tax was first tested out, Thatcher was so unpopular that the Tories' fortunes have never recovered. So it's no surprise that in the 1979 election, the *Economist* noted that Callaghan stood on a "platform of middle-ground conservatism" but Thatcher was dangerously radical and confrontationist. The *Economist* came out for Thatcher anyway, for offering the best hope to revive the economy. The bourgeoisie gambled that the unions did not have a leadership to match Thatcher in hard class war, and

continued on page 7

Press Association

John Sturrock/reportdigital

Thatcher declared war on miners to bring trade-union movement to heel. Right: Leeds miners battle scabs, cops in August 1984 during heroic coal miners strike.

WORKERS VANGUARD

50¢

No. 1024

17 May 2013

Vietnam, Central America, Iraq, Guantánamo

U.S. Imperialism's Machinery of Torture

AP photos

Left: Guards in 2010 escort detainee at Guantánamo, where U.S. holds prisoners indefinitely. Right: Prisoner at infamous U.S.-run Abu Ghraib torture center in Baghdad, 2003.

Since a mass hunger strike at the U.S. Guantánamo prison camp began in February, the number of detainees participating has grown to at least 100. Their jailers have met this protest against being detained indefinitely in the notorious torture center with what U.S. security forces know best: more brutality. Twice a day, guards take detainees, one by one, from their cells to a separate room and subject them to forced feedings.

In late April, 40 medics were added to the team handling the prisoners, "pulling them into rooms where they are strapped to chairs and have rubber tubes stuck into their noses and snaked down to their stomachs, then pumping in a can's worth of a liquid nutritional supplement" ("A Hundred Hungry Men at Guantánamo," *New Yorker*, 1 May). On May 13, *Al Jazeera* released official U.S. policy documents detailing the procedures for this sadistic process. The detainees are made to wear masks over their mouths while they sit shackled for as long as two hours until testing confirms the liquid has reached their stomachs.

Eighty-six of the remaining 166 detainees had been cleared for release years ago. The rest, as the *New Yorker* noted, "are roughly divided between those the Administration says it might bestir itself to bring a case against someday, and those it acknowledges it doesn't have enough evidence against, but finds somehow unsettling, and so is locking up anyway." The Guantánamo prisoners, many indiscriminately rounded up by the U.S. military around 2002 or sold to their captors by local forces for bounty, were from the outset physically brutalized and subjected to intense psychological torment and humiliation designed to break them. These desperate men fear they will never get out alive. We demand: *Free the detainees now!*

With his liberal supporters wringing their hands over the hunger strikes, President Obama briefly rediscovered his old campaign promise to close Guantánamo, citing concerns on April 30 that "it is expensive, it is inefficient, it hurts us in terms of our international standing." While Obama cynically blames Congress for supposedly tying his hands, his plan to close Guantánamo was never a plan to end the system of indefinite detention, only to relocate it onto American soil. The top Pentagon official for detainee policy recently told the *New York Times* that, even if Congress dropped its restrictions on transferring the detainees, "I don't believe the numbers would change radically" (24 April). Indeed, a year before Congress imposed the restrictions, Obama barred repatriations to Yemen, home of the majority of the detainees cleared for release. Meanwhile, the military has spent millions of dollars in recent years on a state-of-the-art courthouse at Guantánamo, housing for lawyers and guards, and other construction. The Pentagon is requesting nearly $200 million more for further upgrades.

AP

May 2011: William McRaven, commander of Joint Special Operations Command, the Pentagon's military intelligence and assassination unit, with Commander-in-Chief Obama.

But at the same time it's true that Obama is taking few prisoners, preferring assassinations by drones and special operations forces. Over 3,000 people have been slaughtered in drone strikes in Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia. These include "signature strikes," e.g., targeting groups of "military-aged males" in a region under surveillance. Obama has also authorized the expansion of covert operations into countries across the Near East, the Horn of Africa, Central Asia and beyond.

The torture, assassinations and other barbaric practices meted out daily in the name of the "war on terror" have always been features of U.S. imperialism. In fact, many of the torture techniques its forces use today harken back to those employed at the turn of the 20th century to suppress the heroic uprising against the U.S. occupation of the Philippines. Up to half a million Filipinos were slaughtered, and men, women and children were herded into concentration camps.

In the imperialist epoch, the major capitalist powers—which compete with each other in exploiting dependent and economically backward countries—have built up massive military arsenals. At the top of

continued on page 10

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"Warsaw Ghetto Anti-Nazi Uprising of Labor"

Last month marked the 70th anniversary of the heroic uprising against the Nazis by Jews interned in the Warsaw Ghetto. Memorial events grotesquely claimed the memory of these martyrs for Zionist Israel, a state whose oppression of the Palestinian people calls to mind the Nazis' drive for *lebensraum* ("living space"). During the Nazi occupation, Zionist leaders in the West provided little assistance to the East European Jews. As

By Art Preis

***Militant*, 6 May 1944**

Polish Jews bitterly observed in a January 1943 appeal to American Jewish leaders: "The survivors of the Jews in Poland live with the awareness that in the worst days of our history you have given us no aid."

Who came to the assistance of the isolated and courageous Jews fighting extermination? The Polish nationalist Home Army not only refused to offer any practical or military assistance but also pocketed most of the small quantity of arms airlifted from Britain for the ghetto insurgents. The British Royal Air Force refused to bomb the gas chambers of Auschwitz even as they carried out sorties a few miles away. But 600,000 Soviet soldiers died liberating Poland from the Nazi scourge. We honor their memory. (For more, see "Hail Warsaw Ghetto Fighters!" *WV* No. 452, 6 May 1988.)

As our comrades of the Spartakusowska Grupa Polski said, "We stand in the tradition of the brave Trotskyists in the Jewish ghetto of Warsaw" (*WV* No. 892, 11 May 2007). Trotskyists, including those of *Czerwony Sztandar* [Red Flag] who went to their deaths in the Warsaw Ghetto, sided militarily with the Soviet Union despite the misrule of the Stalinist bureaucracy and opposed all the imperialist combatants, not least the "democratic" Allied powers. For the imperialists, World War II was a struggle over the redivision of colonies and spheres of exploitation. The Trotskyists saw in the German working class, trampled under the fascist jackboot, the instrument to overthrow the Nazi regime and to expropriate the bourgeoisie that had brought Hitler to power.

Zionist leaders remained silent about Nazi atrocities. The American government kept their knowledge secret as well. But our forebears, the American Trotskyists of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), broke the government and Zionist news blackout. They reported in their newspaper, the *Militant*, on 19 September 1942 that the State Department had "suppressed information that it received from its consular agents in Switzerland. This information has to do with the treatment of the Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto. Evidence of the greatest atrocities has occurred there in connection with the renewed campaign to exterminate all Jews." The SWP also fought to lift U.S. immigration restrictions on Jewish refugees, even as American Zionist leaders did not.

The article reprinted below, which was based on the limited information available at the time, originally appeared in the *Militant* on 6 May 1944.

* * *

The Battle of the Warsaw Ghetto, which began on April 19, 1943 and raged for 42 days, will go down in history as the first great revolutionary act of working-class mass resistance to the Nazi enslavers and hangmen of Occupied Europe.

Stroop Report

Defiant fighters of the Warsaw Ghetto, rounded up by Hitler's savage SS.

Amid the dark alleyways and crumbling walls of their rat-infested, disease-ridden Ghetto prison, 40,000 men, women and children, the proletarian remnants of the Jewish population of Warsaw, Poland, went to their death battling arms in hand against the massed, trained legions of Hitler.

With weapons sufficient for only 3,000 fighters, the starved and ragged Jewish workers, who were organized and led by the labor and socialist underground movement, for six weeks held out with revolvers, rifles, a few machine guns, home-made bombs, knives, clubs and stones against thousands of trained soldiers using heavy artillery, tanks, flame throwers and aerial bombs.

The battle ended only after the Nazis dynamited and put to the torch every hovel and tenement in the entire area, and when every Jewish fighter lay dead under the ashes and rubble that marked the site where 400,000 Jews once lived.

Three Facts

Only within recent weeks have some of the details of the Battle of the Warsaw Ghetto been revealed outside of the labor and socialist press. But from the still-scanty information now available, three salient facts stand out. The Jewish fighters of the Warsaw Ghetto were overwhelmingly workers, armed, organized and led by the labor and socialist underground. They were inspired not merely by Jewish and Polish nationalist sentiment, but by class solidarity and socialist convictions, hoping that their struggle, conducted under the red flag, would help to arouse the workers everywhere in Poland and Europe to revolutionary class struggle. And theirs was not a "spontaneous revolt, out of desperation," as bourgeois press commentators would have it appear, but a well-prepared, skillfully planned, organized mass action.

The Gestapo on July 22, 1942, demanded that the Judenrat (Jewish Council) deliver 6,000 to 10,000 persons a day for deportation to the "East," as it turned out, for mass execution in specially designed gas chambers or by machine-gunning. Deceptively, the Nazis broadcast the rumor that the deportees were going to labor camps and even "the machinery of the Jewish auxiliary police was utilized by the Germans to spread rumors about the favorable labor conditions which awaited the deported." (*The Battle of Warsaw* by S. Mendelsohn.) The Ghetto was a self-contained, isolated world with its own government, police, firemen and public health agencies.

The extermination campaign was initiated because "the German authorities, according to the report of the Polish government representatives, reckoned with the possibility of armed resistance at the time when there were still half a million Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto. They were afraid of it..."

Extermination Campaign

Within the Ghetto, a conflict arose. The Jewish leadership from the bourgeois class counseled against resistance, spreading the hope that the deportations were what the Nazis claimed. But the Jewish underground labor organizations, according to an official report to the Polish government-in-exile, "through handbills warned against the trap and called at least for passive resistance."

The extermination campaign raged unabated. By January 1943, only about 40,000 to 45,000 of the original 400,000 Jews remained alive in the Ghetto. During this entire period, the Allied powers and their press scarcely commented on the unprecedented mass slaughter of the Jewish people.

Then came accounts of the first resistance. In the Polish newspaper *Przez Walke do Zwyciesta*, Jan. 20, 1943, it was reported, "We extend our admiration to the Fighter Unit (of the Jewish Labor underground) which during the latest liquidation met the Gestapo with gun in hand. Shooting broke out and developed into a real battle on Zamenhofa Street from where the Gestapo agents and German police had to flee and to which they returned only with reinforcements. Jews defended themselves with hand grenades and revolvers. Twenty Gestapo agents and police are dead and many more wounded."

For three months the Nazis drew back from completing their liquidation drive. The Jewish workers of Warsaw used the respite to organize further for armed resistance.

Nazi Attack

When, in the middle of April, 1943, the Gestapo and Nazi military police attempted to renew the "deportation" drive, their orders for an assemblage of the Ghetto inhabitants were defied. Their police detachments tried to enter the Ghetto. "As a reply from the seemingly empty houses came flying bullets and hand grenades. Roofs and attics began to spit fire and to rain death on the German police. Fear descended on Hitler's henchmen. They fled in confusion." (*Polska*, April 29, 1943.)

From the account of an official representative of the Polish Government-in-Exile, we learn that the Nazis began the attack with "numerous, heavily armed S.S. detachments on cars mounted with machine guns and on tanks."

"The actions of the defenders were perfectly coordinated," says the report, "and the battles were fought on practically the entire territory of the Ghetto. Jewish resistance was brilliantly planned, so that in spite of the vast superiority in men and materiel on the German side, good results were achieved. In the first days of combat the Germans took severe punishment; hundreds of them were killed and more wounded. Several times they had to retreat behind the Ghetto walls. During the first week the battle had all the characteristics of regular military operations. The din of a tremendous cannonade was constantly heard from the Ghetto." This phase of the battle lasted a week.

Authentic Accounts

Then the Nazis concentrated forces at individual points of resistance reducing them slowly one by one with dynamite, flame throwers and incendiary bombs. The Jewish workers fell back on guerrilla tactics, fighting from cellars, roofs, sewers, sortying out at night to assault the Nazi troops under cover of darkness. "The burning in the Ghetto kept spreading. The fires were becoming intolerable. After six days of further combat, after the Germans had already been using planes, artillery and tanks, they managed to break into the northern part of the Ghetto... By April 28th, the Germans had thrown into the battle 6,000 heavily armed troops. Estimates place the number of Germans dead

continued on page 11

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.

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The closing date for news in this issue is May 14.

No. 1024 **17 May 2013**

Black Teen Jailed for Science Experiment

By all accounts, Kiera Wilmot is an exemplary honor student and has a perfect behavior record. According to the principal of Bartow High School in Polk County, Florida, she is a "good kid" who has "never been in trouble before. Ever." But on April 22, when the 16-year-old acted on her intellectual curiosity by performing a chemistry experiment, she outrageously was expelled from school and dragged to a detention center in handcuffs at the behest of an assistant principal. Charged as an adult with two felonies—possession/discharge of a weapon on school grounds and discharging a destructive device—Kiera faces a possible five years in jail. Thanks to school and state authorities, her life is now upended.

The "weapon" and "destructive device" that Kiera "discharged" was a small plastic water bottle in which, in preparation for a science fair, she mixed common household chemicals and aluminum foil to see how they would react. The chemical reaction triggered a tiny pop "like a firecracker," harmlessly blowing off the lid and producing a small amount of smoke. No one was injured, and no property was damaged. The only casualty was the plastic bottle!

The punishment handed out to Kiera Wilmot exemplifies the systematic racist criminalization of black and minority students in the public schools that is embodied in punitive "zero tolerance" policies. Each year, more than three million students nationwide are suspended and over 100,000 expelled. Black students are three and a half times more likely to be suspended or expelled than their white peers. According to the U.S. Department of Education, over 70 percent of students arrested and funneled through what has become known as the school-to-prison pipeline are black or Latino.

Borrowing a page from the sinister "war on drugs" crusade against blacks and other minorities, "zero-tolerance" policies spread through schools after Bill Clinton signed into law the 1994 Gun-Free Schools Act that mandates a one-year expulsion for any student possessing a weapon. What constitutes a weapon has proved very elastic: everything from pencils to Pop-Tarts and Hello Kitty toys. Even using their fingers as imaginary guns resulted in suspension for two 6-year-olds in Maryland. As a result of this "zero tolerance," across the country black and minority students in segregated public schools confront conditions that resemble detention centers rather than a place of learning. A heavy police presence, metal detectors, video cameras, drug testing and locker searches are the norm. Tens of thousands have been arrested for what amounts to nothing other than typical juvenile behavior: tardiness, idle doodling, talking back and so on.

Even black children in kindergarten are treated as dangerous criminals. In 2012, six-year-old Salecia Johnson was suspended from school in Milledgeville, Georgia, handcuffed by police and placed in a holding cell after throwing a tantrum. She was charged with damage to property and simple battery. With black youth deemed expendable by the racist capitalist ruling class that has no jobs for them to fill, the "education" system is essentially a holding pen that serves to reinforce their isolation in a society where 28 percent of black men are destined to spend time behind bars.

Gunler/Cleveland Plain Dealer

Security guard frisks child at entrance to Cleveland elementary school.

WTSP

Kiera Wilmot

Wilmot's case is a grotesque expression of the class and race bias endemic to the American education system and society as a whole. It also points to the anti-science mind-set that permeates it. With the slashing of already meager funding and the stifling of creative potential, it is no surprise that U.S. students rank 35th internationally in math, between Azerbaijan and Croatia, and 29th in science, between Latvia and Lithuania—countries many Americans cannot identify on the map.

Kiera Wilmot's ordeal has drawn thousands of supporters to her defense. Dozens of people, young and old, rallied in her support outside Polk County Courthouse last week. Thousands have signed petitions on the Internet demanding the rescinding of her expulsion and dropping the charges against her, and some individuals have initiated defense funds. Outraged scientists have also vented their fury in solidarity with Wilmot. As biologist Danielle N. Lee wrote in a *Scientific American* blog (1 May): "I can't name a single scientist or engineer, who hadn't blown up, ripped apart, disassembled something at home or otherwise cause a big ruckus at school all in the name of curiosity, myself included." She added that science "is very messy and it is riddled with mistakes and mishaps."

Experimenting with science is not a crime, and scientific curiosity should not be punished. ***We demand the immediate reinstatement of Kiera Wilmot! Drop all the charges!*** ■

Letter

On Andrew Johnson

25 April 2013

Dear WV,

I was shocked to read the epithet "poor white trash" in the most recent (#1022) issue of *Workers Vanguard*. "Poor white trash" is a phrase, along with "trailer trash," that one hears frequently in this sick society, a phrase that implicitly expresses contempt for the poor and powerless. Some of this "trash" will certainly become brothers and sisters in the fight for the liberation of humanity.

Of course the phrase was not used in quite this way in your article on the Emancipation Proclamation. It was used to refer to Andrew Johnson and his ilk, which, if any humans can be thought of as "trash," they are certainly fine examples. But in a decent, i.e., socialist, society the phrase itself will surely be relegated to the blighted past when society was tormented by the poison of bourgeois ideology.

A *WV* reader from Boston

***WV* replies:**

It is true that Marxists—who seek to win the downtrodden to unite behind the multiracial working class—do not throw around the epithet "poor white trash." As our reader indicates, the term was used in the article specifically to describe President Johnson: "Johnson had an all-consuming hatred of black people. He was a former slaveowner with the mentality of poor white trash, a racist appeaser of remnants of the slavocracy" ("150 Years Since the Emancipation Proclamation, Part Two," *WV* No. 1022, 19 April).

It would have been correct to say that Johnson had the mentality of what the lords of the lash called "poor white trash." Poor whites were worth less to the planter aristocracy than were black slaves. Johnson was raised in an impoverished white family and was steeped in the limitations, prejudices and ambitions of his social class. For a while, he was able to partially transcend his origins. He began his political career as a champion of the poor laborer. Starting in the 1840s, he fought for granting free land to farmers (part of the Homestead Act of 1862). As a staunch Unionist during the Civil War, he demanded severe punishment of those Southerners who had brought on the war. When he assumed the presidency after Lincoln's assassination, many thought that bloody retribution might be the order of the day. But the war had changed everything.

When, after the war, Johnson realized that black people would have to be included in any dispensation that benefited poor whites, he did a 180-degree turn. As our article stated: "Johnson was really fearful of a link-up of black and white poor. The idea of real social and political equality repelled him." He dealt terrible blows to the fight for black equality. In *Black Reconstruction in America 1860-1880* (1935), W.E.B. Du Bois wrote that Johnson represented "the tragedy of American prejudice made flesh; so that the man born to narrow circumstances, a rebel against economic privilege, died with the conventional ambition of a poor white to be the associate and benefactor of monopolists, planters and slave drivers." ■

CORRECTION

In "Wounded Knee Massacre Site Up for Sale" (*WV* No. 1023, 3 May), we wrote that the Lakota and their allies routed the Seventh Cavalry at Little Bighorn four years before the Wounded Knee massacre of 1890. It was 14 years earlier, in 1876.

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Hands Off the Unions!

Canadian Government Invades Union Finances

We reprint the following article from Spartacist Canada *No. 176 (Spring 2013), newspaper of the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste, Canadian section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).*

SPARTACIST CANADA

Spartacist Canada

Toronto, January 26: Thousands of trade unionists protest outside convention of Ontario Liberal Party.

Last December, the [Conservative (Tory)] Harper government adopted Bill C-377, a law that would force every trade union in the country to open its financial records to state authorities. Under its provisions, the capitalist ruling class and its government will be able to directly monitor unions' strike funds, pension assets, political contributions and the issues and causes they support. Any labour organization failing to comply faces fines of $1,000 per day. This is a fundamental assault on the rights of every working person. The state has no business telling the unions what they should or should not do with their money.

The capitalists are now itching to take their attacks a step further by going for labour's jugular through union-busting "right to work" laws. Ontario Tory leader Tim Hudak has made this a key plank in his election platform. Similar schemes are being hatched by the Saskatchewan government, Alberta's opposition Wildrose party and at least one prominent MP [Member of Parliament] in the federal Tory caucus. If implemented, such laws would effectively ban the closed shop, crippling the unions financially and dividing the workforce by making dues payments optional.

Editorial and op-ed writers in the capitalist press are salivating at the prospect of gutting the unions. But whether the bosses get away with their schemes will ultimately depend not on what laws get passed, but on the outcome of the class struggle. It will take a serious, hard-nosed fight that unleashes labour's social power to beat back the anti-union offensive.

It's no wonder the employers smell blood. The labour movement has been in headlong retreat, thanks to the careerist turncoats atop the unions who have capitulated on every front. In the private sector, Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) president Ken Lewenza surrendered $19 to $22 an hour of members' wages and benefits to the bosses without a struggle in the 2009 auto bailouts. In the public sector, leaders of the Toronto city unions gave up huge concessions without a strike early last year. Other unionized workers, from steelworkers in Hamilton to Sudbury miners and more, have been saddled with giveback contracts including big cuts to jobs and pensions.

For Class-Struggle Leadership!

As for Bill C-377, the ink hadn't even had time to dry before the labour misleaders raised the white flag. Last fall, a column in the bosses' *Financial Post* (6 September 2012) by Lewenza and Dave Coles of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers union (which is about to merge with the CAW) griped about the bill's "onerous and discriminatory accounting regulations," with not a hint of the need to mobilize the unions' membership to stop it. For his part, NDP [New Democratic Party] federal labour critic Alexandre Boulerice issued a press release faithfully entrusting the issue to the capitalist courts and a constitutional appeal.

Pettifogging legalism, cap-in-hand parliamentary lobbying, electoral support every four years to the pro-capitalist NDP (or even the thoroughly capitalist Liberal Party): this is the program that has brought the workers movement to its knees. As of 2011, private-sector unionization was down to 17 percent, from 22 percent 15 years previously. The frequency of strikes is now 0.03 percent—a drop of 90 percent since the 1970s! The union tops' cringing loyalty to the bosses is amplified by the NDP social democrats and their preachments of "sacrifice" to the working class. Wages, pensions, vacation time and sick leave have all been on the chopping block, with each new retreat emboldening the capitalists to push harder.

The ongoing global economic crisis has provided new opportunities for the capitalists to open a trap door beneath the feet of working people. The handmaiden to ruling-class "austerity," union-busting laws aim at intensifying the rate of exploitation, i.e., jacking up profits by shrinking labour costs. Far from being some kind of "misguided policy" of conservative economists and politicians (as the union bureaucracy would have it), such assaults are the inevitable requirement of the profit-driven capitalist system.

The Canadian ruling class is looking with envy to its senior partners in the U.S., where anti-union laws in various states have helped throw workers' living standards into free fall. In early 2011, all eyes were turned to the Midwest, where an explosion of workers' anger was sparked when the Wisconsin state legislature passed a union-busting law against public employees. Criminally, the union bureaucrats refused to wield the vast social power of labour shown (briefly) in the streets. Instead, they strangled militants' hopes and energies by diverting them into a months-long campaign to recall Republican officeholders, aiming to replace them with politicians from the other party of U.S. capitalism, the Democrats.

The "right to work" cancer soon metastasized to nearby Indiana. Then on December 11, 2012, Michigan, a labour stronghold since the 1930s and birthplace of the United Auto Workers (UAW), became the 24th state to enact such laws. Just one day later, Harper's Tories rushed Bill C-377 through parliament.

Why Workers Risk Their Lives for Unions

Since the dawn of the industrial revolution, in the fight to build and join trade unions men and women have defied the bosses' rules, burned their strikebreaking injunctions and faced down their cops and scabs on picket lines. By the 1930s and '40s, every class-conscious worker in this country knew a union shop meant the difference between squalid poverty and a living wage; a degree of safety on the job vs. daily peril to life and limb; bowing before management favouritism vs. the possibility of collectively standing up for your rights. All this is now laid out for sacrifice on the altar of capital, put there by the labour traitors.

On the heels of the second imperialist World War a strike wave gripped the burgeoning Ontario steel and auto industries. In Windsor in 1945, 17,000 Ford workers waged a bitter, months-long struggle for a union, thwarting police strikebreaking with massive picket lines and street blockades. To tame the threat of a surging labour movement, the bosses' arbitrator, Supreme Court judge Ivan Rand, struck a devil's bargain with the UAW tops.

The "Rand formula," which became a standard feature of union contracts in Canada, recognized the union's right to collect dues and to represent its members, but only in exchange for a ban on strikes in the life of a contract, with severe financial penalties for any violations. The union also won the automatic dues check-off, whereby dues are directly collected by the employer then transferred to the union. This measure secured some financial stability for the unions, but it undermined contact between the union leadership and workers on the shop floor, serving to institutionalize class collaboration at the top.

The current threats to ban the dues check-off are aimed at bankrupting the unions and hamstringing their ability to fight. ***Every worker has an immediate stake in fighting these attacks tooth and nail!*** But the present system of collecting dues via the companies also epitomizes the bureaucrats' legalism and fervent desire for "labour peace." Making the boss the union's banker sets up the union for financial blackmail and further undercuts its capacity to strike. A class-struggle leadership would fight for the unions to directly control dues collection.

Down With Anti-Labour Witchhunt!

It's no coincidence that the calls for anti-union legislation became louder dur-

WV Photo

March 2011: Spartacists at rally at Wisconsin State Capitol against union-busting bill pushed by Governor Scott Walker.

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Partisan Defense Committee

CLASS-STRUGGLE DEFENSE NOTES

The PDC is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League.

14,000 Demand: Free Lynne Stewart Now!

As we reported two months ago, the family of class-war prisoner Lynne Stewart is waging a desperate fight for a "compassionate" release to obtain critical medical treatment. The 73-year-old Stewart has been battling breast cancer, which has metastasized and spread to her lymph nodes, shoulder and lungs. Following bouts of debilitating chemotherapy, Stewart's cancer remains at Stage 4.

A radical lawyer with a history of defending leftists, black militants and others in the crosshairs of the imperialist rulers, Stewart was railroaded to prison on ludicrous "support to terrorism" charges for zealously defending her client, a blind Islamic cleric. Over 14,000 have signed a petition demanding Stewart's release that was circulated by her family. Typical of the many messages of support, famed actor Ed Asner stated: "In tormenting Lynne Stewart the government seeks to terrorize all lawyers who would defend those targeted by State repression. The treatment of Lynne Stewart is a threat to due process, an assault on fundamental rights that date to Magna Carta."

Last month, Stewart's husband Ralph Poynter reported that the warden of FMC Carswell recommended Stewart's release. Standing in the way of Stewart's going home is the federal judge who resentenced her to ten years in prison. We continue to urge readers of *WV* to sign the petition posted on lynnestewart.org. Contributions to Stewart's legal defense can be sent to: Lynne Stewart Organization, 1070 Dean Street, Brooklyn, NY 11216.

WV Photo

Lynne Stewart with her husband, Ralph Poynter, following her conviction in February 2005.

We print below an appreciation of Stewart by Tom Manning dated April 3 and sent to the Partisan Defense Committee. Like Stewart and his comrade Jaan Laaman, Manning is one of 20 activists behind bars receiving stipends under the PDC's program of support to class-war prisoners. Manning and Laaman were members of the group of anti-imperialist fighters that came to be known as the Ohio 7, convicted for their roles in a radical group that took credit for bank "expropriations" and bombings of symbols of U.S. imperialism, such as military and corporate offices, in the late 1970s and '80s.

Before their arrests in 1984 and 1985, the Ohio 7 were targets of massive manhunts. Having already sentenced the Ohio 7 to decades in prison, the Feds subsequently tried three of them on charges of "seditious conspiracy." Despite pouring $10 million into this effort, the government failed in its ominous attempt to revive the sweeping McCarthy-era criminalization of left-wing political activism. This was a victory for the working class and all oppressed. Yet today Ohio 7 attorney Stewart has been condemned to what could be a death sentence under the "war on terror," presently a more effective means to isolate and witchhunt left-wing activists. Free Lynne Stewart! Free Tom Manning and Jaan Laaman! Free the class-war prisoners!

* * *

Dear Folks—

Your stipend gift arrived, again, welcome and useful as ever.

In appreciation I thought I'd copy something I'd written for Mumia—back at ADX, and send it to you all. To do with as you will—a gift to a supporter?

Thinking about Lynne, a dear friend, a part of our defense team in all ten United Freedom Front trials—always bringing joy and solidarity into the prisons for late night visits hours of travel time away from her home in N.Y.C.—her children and her partner Ralph becoming part of the family—Ralph our investigator, traveling back to Ohio, Pennsylvania, and wherever else need checking on. Coming back with a report on how my Great Dane, Chico, was doing five years after I had to abandon him as the FBI Hostage Rescue Team assaulted our farm house with Huey helicopters bearing large Red Cross insignia—a violation of the Geneva Convention.

Their positive spirits in the visiting room would get under the skin of the guard that, one night they keyed Ralph's car—all down the driver's side.

Twice, the judge ordered blood taken from me to use DNA in the trial—knowing I'd resist to the best of my ability—in keeping with my vow of total non-collaboration. Lynne came into the prison as moral support. On the first occasion I was beaten so bad—the guys in the block rioted for four days, and Lynne was badly shaken. The authorities lost the videotape of the event. On the second occasion Lynne got a court order to bring a camera—and videotaped the whole thing. On each blood taking, the shoulder of the arm they wanted—was badly damaged—and both had to have open rotator cuff surgery. As I write I'm awaiting a total reverse shoulder implant—stemming from the original damage. Lynne's tape of that day will always be there—as a piece of this history.

She would make sure we'd get to read any book we expressed interest in, or that she thought we'd find interesting—especially anything on John Brown. A man close to her heart.

So as I read of her troubles now—her health and captivity situation—it galls me bitterly not to be able to bring her relief.

The struggle continues!

Tom Manning

---

ing the wave of social struggle in Quebec sparked by last year's student strike. In September, Harper protégé and Ottawa-area MP Pierre Poilievre seized on a donation to the student strikers by the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC), and especially on a PSAC committee's statement of support for candidates of the Parti Québécois and Québec Solidaire in that month's Quebec elections.

Raving against the union's support to "political parties whose avowed goal is Quebec separation," Poilievre demanded action against "forced unionism." His Quebec-bashing campaign was picked up by bourgeois press outlets including Sun Media and the *National Post*. A 4 September [2012] *Post* headline thundered, "With PQ endorsement, the federal PSAC union launches its membership off a cliff."

Another media furor used to ram through Bill C-377 was whipped up over the Canadian Union of Postal Workers' decision to send delegates to a World Social Forum "Free Palestine" event in Brazil. This led to lying, terrorist-baiting diatribes in the *Toronto Sun*. The right of unions to spend money on political and social causes of their own choosing—from defense of the Palestinians, to support for abortion rights and solidarity with Native struggles—has been a perennial target of anti-union propaganda.

We defend the right of unions to choose where to spend their funds, with absolutely no interference from the capitalists. At the same time, class-struggle militants must fight inside the unions in opposition to policies that are against the workers' interests, such as support to bourgeois parties and to the flagrantly pro-capitalist NDP. Pouring money into impotent "public relations" campaigns, along with electoral support every few years to the NDP (or the Liberals), has been a direct route to the graveyard.

The NDP was founded in 1961 on the twin pillars of Cold War anti-Communism and the myth that the capitalist state serves the interests of the exploiter and exploited alike. It is a textbook example of what V.I. Lenin, leader of the 1917 workers revolution in Russia, dubbed a "bourgeois workers party": a labour party with a pro-capitalist program and leadership. The strategic task of communists is to politically split such parties by winning the working-class base away from the influence of the social-democratic misleaders to a class-struggle program and worldview.

For a Revolutionary Workers Party!

In a 1940 article titled "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay," the Marxist leader Leon Trotsky wrote:

> "It is necessary to adapt ourselves to the concrete conditions existing in the trade unions of every given country in order to mobilize the masses, not only against the bourgeoisie, but also against the totalitarian regime within the trade unions themselves and against the leaders enforcing this regime. The primary slogan for this struggle is: ***complete and unconditional independence of the trade unions in relation to the capitalist state***. This means a struggle to turn the trade unions into the organs of the broad exploited masses and not the organs of a labor aristocracy."

There is a burning need for a working-class counteroffensive, a determined and militant fight to organize the unorganized in every workplace. This must go hand-in-hand with the defense by labour of Native people, women and all those oppressed under capitalism. The unions must actively defend foreign-born workers, demanding full citizenship rights for all immigrants. Against the efforts of the capitalist media to isolate and demonize relatively better-off union members, a struggle by both public and private sector unions to defend their hard-won gains and expand health care, pensions and other social services for everyone could mobilize broad support among non-union workers and the poor.

Public Archives of Canada

Workers from Motor Products Corporation picket Ford of Canada in solidarity with 1945 strike by UAW in Windsor, Ontario.

The key to unchaining the power of the working class is the building of a binational, internationalist workers party dedicated to sweeping away the capitalist profit system. In the face of deep divisions between workers in English Canada and Quebec—divisions constantly reinforced by the NDP and union tops' crusades for "Canadian unity"—such a party would combat all instances of Anglo chauvinism and advocate independence for Quebec. At the same time, workers in Quebec must be broken from the bourgeois-nationalist Parti Québécois which sells the lie of a common interest between Québécois workers and their "own" francophone exploiters, and from illusions in the PQ's petty-bourgeois left appendage, Québec Solidaire.

The insatiable hunger of capitalism for higher profits at the expense of labour cannot be effectively fought by the servile hacks and social-democratic politicians who now lead the workers movement. A fighting workers leadership would seek to connect the struggles of today to the need for a socialist revolution to rip the productive wealth of society from the hands of the capitalist rulers and build a planned, collectivized economy where production is based on social need, not private profit. ■

Reuters

Silvio Berlusconi

Italian Elections

Reuters

Beppe Grillo

Austerity, Populism and Anti-Worker Attacks

The following leaflet was issued by our comrades of the Lega Trotskista d'Italia on April 30 and distributed at the traditional May Day march in Milan.

The January elections have shaken the bourgeois political landscape. The bourgeoisie expected that the elections would result in a coalition government consisting of the Democratic Party (PD) and the electoral slate headed by outgoing prime minister Mario Monti, with the liberal left in Left Ecology Freedom (SEL) tagging along. The idea was that this government, with the support of the union bureaucracies, would become a trustworthy tool to impose the brutal austerity and public spending cuts required to guarantee the profits that Italian and foreign banks expect from their investments in the Italian national debt.

Reuters

Rome, September 2012: Cops attack Alcoa metal workers protesting lost jobs outside Ministry of Employment office.

Down With the Capitalist European Union! For a Workers Europe!

Instead, the elections were a deformed expression of popular resistance to the diktats of the "market" and the European Union (EU). The slate headed by Monti received barely 10 percent of the vote. The PD, rightly seen as stalwart defenders of Monti's austerity program, lost 3.5 million votes. Berlusconi's People of Freedom (PDL) managed to avoid catastrophe only through an about-face, passing itself off as Monti's bitter enemy after a year of supporting him while playing anti-tax demagogy to the hilt. The real winner of the elections was the Five Star Movement (M5S) led by Beppe Grillo, a bourgeois demagogue with a reactionary streak, which managed to garner 25 percent of the vote from both the left and right ends of the political spectrum with his "go f--k yourself" message to the political establishment.

The M5S is a bourgeois political formation that expresses the despair of the petty bourgeoisie as it confronts a deep economic crisis and the support of all the major bourgeois parties (first and foremost, the PD) for the austerity measures dictated by the EU and imposed by the Monti government and its predecessors. Its program is a mixture of ecologist prescriptions, invocations to bourgeois "legality," rabid nationalism and protectionism. It demands that the unions be kept in line and calls for drastic cuts in pensions and wages for public-sector workers. If this plan were carried out, it could only lead to harsh attacks on the working class. Despite the fact that it garnered its votes primarily from angry unemployed youth, petty capitalists in financial ruin and large sectors of a disgruntled working class bled dry by capitalist austerity, the M5S is as much an enemy of workers, immigrants and minorities as any of the other parties. To paraphrase American writer Gore Vidal, one could say that within the grotesque circus known as the Italian parliament, there is a monster with three wings—all of them right wings.

After a month of contortions and internal strife, the PD and the PDL have managed to throw together a national unity government to continue the blood and tears policy imposed by Monti and his predecessors. The new government was blessed by the re-election of 87-year-old president Napolitano and the appointment of Democrat Enrico Letta as prime minister. (The latter is known as "the nephew of his uncle"—Gianni Letta was Berlusconi's right-hand man and was named "Gentleman of his Holiness" by [then Pope] Ratzinger.)

In the face of the devastation wreaked by the bourgeoisie's economic and political crisis, a powerful class-struggle response to populist demagoguery and austerity plans is urgently needed. Factory closings and layoffs must be met with a call to divide all available work among the entire available workforce with no reduction in pay. A sliding scale of wages is necessary to confront the increasing gap between the value of wages and the cost of living. Unions must take up the defense of immigrant workers, who are the first fired, and demand full citizenship rights for them.

The working class, acting as the vanguard for vast sectors of the impoverished and oppressed, has the power to defeat the capitalists' schemes. The main obstacle faced by workers is their own union leaderships, which politically embrace the bourgeois order and support the reactionary European Union—and have thus far been successful in containing and isolating struggles. These bureaucrats spread the lie that workers and their exploiters share a common "national interest," and thus workers have to sacrifice their share when the economy goes down the drain. But workers and capitalists *have opposing class interests*. The boom and bust cycles endemic to the capitalist system will be eliminated only when the proletariat comes to power and takes control of the means of production currently owned by the bourgeoisie, building a collectivized and planned economy on an international scale.

For a Socialist United States of Europe!

Back in January, European Commission President Barroso declared: "We can say that the existential threat against the euro has essentially been overcome." But in fact this is still just the beginning of the euro crisis and the euro zone continues to unravel. Unable to contain the debt crisis that erupted in 2010, the imperialist masters of the EU and their partners in the International Monetary Fund [IMF] continue to bleed working people dry. The last "rescue package" (to salvage the capitalist bloodsuckers) struck the tiny Republic of Cyprus. The Troika (the IMF, European Central Bank and EU) answered Cyprus's request for support to their banks by demanding in return the complete destruction of the island's economy, which had served as a tax haven in recent years.

In Italy, Mario Monti's "technocratic" government—which came to power in November 2011 with the support of the PD and the PDL in a broad national-unity coalition—dedicated all its efforts to making sure that the state's debt to financial and industrial capitalists was repaid to the last euro, squeezing the working class and the petty bourgeoisie to line the bankers' pockets. His government slashed billions from pensions, public workers' wages and health services. Contracts in both the private and public sectors have gotten worse, while unemployment continues to rise. Some 609,000 jobs were lost in 2012 alone and another 488,000 in the first two months of 2013. Eight million people live below the poverty line. Youth unemployment has reached 38.7 percent and only 23 percent of women younger than 34 years of age have jobs. A huge number of immigrant workers, already hit hard by the initial crisis in 2008, have been thrown into conditions of greater misery, facing the risk of deportation and even more exploitative working conditions.

The crisis has had greatest impact in those EU countries whose economies have been historically weaker than the German zone. In 2010, international finance, fearing a default by Greece, stopped borrowing against its debt [i.e., buying government bonds] and imposed a series of draconian "reforms" to guarantee repayments to its mainly German, French and Italian creditors. The Greek economy sank into a recessionary spiral, and the debt crisis spread to Spain, Portugal, Italy and Cyprus. The consequences for the working class in these countries were devastating. In Spain and Greece, the unemployment rate exceeds 27 percent and living conditions for the population have been thrown back decades.

The plundering of the economies of

smaller and dependent countries confirms that the EU is an imperialist trade bloc, dominated by German and French capitalists, whose aim is to ratchet up the exploitation of the European working class, control the influx of immigrant labor and gain a competitive edge against their imperialist rivals in the U.S. and Japan. The devastation of the standard of living for workers in Greece, Portugal and Spain shows that, despite a lot of hot air about European "convergence," there was never any intention to raise poorer countries to the level of the wealthier ones. On the contrary, the aim was to create a "flexible labor market," i.e., a low-cost workforce without union protection.

In Italy, the reformist left supported the creation of the EU imperialist conglomerate. Now that their pro-capitalist politics have proven bankrupt, the reformists denounce the domination of Merkel's Germany over smaller, poorer Italian capitalism. Rifondazione Comunista (PRC) went so far as to argue that [right-wing politicians Umberto] Bossi and [Giulio] Tremonti should be "tried for treason" for allowing Italy to become "a Bavarian Chinatown" (paoloferrero.it, 11 August 2011).

We in the International Communist League have always opposed and continue to oppose the EU on principle, just as we do any other imperialist alliance. We said from the get-go that the euro would be a tool of the imperialist EU and opposed its introduction. We also opposed the eastward expansion of the EU because it was clear that it would increase the exploitation of East European workers. At the same time, we fought against chauvinist discrimination that targeted immigrant workers from East Europe.

As Marxists, we know that imperialist blocs and alliances can only last temporarily. Since capitalism is based on nation-states, these alliances will necessarily collapse under the weight of their internal contradictions. Our opposition to these alliances stems from our fundamental opposition to capitalism and imperialism. As we wrote in *Spartaco* No. 75 (January 2012), the working-class answer to the capitalist crisis and the related splintering of the euro zone:

> "does not lie in supporting the EU imperialist madhouse or chauvinist national protectionism, but in the proletarian internationalist perspective of constructing a Socialist United States of Europe, based on proletarian power and the overthrow of capitalism. The unification of industry and technology in Europe (and beyond), on the basis of a collectivized and planned economy that extends beyond national borders, is a vital and ineluctable necessity for further development of human civilization because it would put an end to the chaos, anarchy, trade wars and crisis of the capitalist madhouse that this continent has become. The necessary conditions to bring this about are the overthrow of the capitalist ruling class and the establishment of proletarian state power in the major countries on the continent."

5 Star Movement: Populism, Demagogy and Reaction

The rise of the M5S movement is the result of the deep political and social crisis of European and international capitalism. Grillo was able to exploit the widespread popular discontent because all the parties that were once identified with the workers movement and social reforms supported the austerity measures imposed by Brussels, Berlin and Rome.

That large sectors of the working class are in the grip of M5S is a result of the PD's enforcement of austerity politics and some twenty years of betrayals by reformist leaders (Rifondazione), who were implicated in increasingly grotesque class-collaborationist politics. More broadly, it's an expression of the retrogression of consciousness stemming from the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union and the "death of Communism" campaign led by the bourgeoisie and their ex-Stalinist and social-democratic tails.

The M5S gives voice to the exasperation of the petty bourgeoisie, which, secondarily to the working class, has been made to pay a heavy price for the combined consequences of the economic crisis and the national debt. It has also attracted the support of a few capitalist profiteers like Giovanni Consorte, former head of Unipol, and Leonardo del Vecchio, the billionaire owner of Luxottica. Many M5S cadres are drawn from the layer of petty-bourgeois intellectuals who have been left with no options other than short-term work contracts for the notorious wages of the "1,000 euro [per month] generation." The petty bourgeoisie, which typically comprises the core of populist movements, is a heterogeneous social layer that includes artisans, professionals, small (and medium) entrepreneurs, etc. Given its social position, squeezed between big capitalists and the working class, the petty bourgeoisie lacks any independent political perspective and is absolutely incapable of providing an alternative to capitalism. If the working class does not mobilize independently of every faction of the bourgeoisie, pulling the impoverished sectors of the petty bourgeoisie behind it in a fight against capitalism, the large capitalists will have a field day channeling the anger and the frustration of everyone ruined by the crisis against the workers movement and the unions.

The official program of the M5S revolves around populist demagogy against corruption, abuses from "the palace" and the huge costs of politics and public administration. The petty-bourgeois ecology movement and economic support to small and medium Italian capitalists are also important components. For an economic program, M5S champions the interests of small- and medium-sized businesses against the working class and the unions. While promoting demagogic slogans such as a "citizens' wage," millionaire Beppe Grillo and M5S's parliamentary leader, Roberta Lombardi, have called for the abolition of unions. Public-sector workers are portrayed as privileged parasites with large bank accounts, committed to defending the "status quo." Using the defense of public health services as a pretext, the M5S calls for introducing fees "proportional to income for non-essential services" and for downsizing preventive medicine (screenings, early diagnosis, predictive medicine) to replace it with "self-medication," which is entirely consistent with the cuts in public health services.

Grillo has repeatedly let loose with infamous racist tirades against Roma [Gypsy] and Chinese immigrants. He vehemently opposed the proposal to introduce "ius soli," automatic citizenship rights for children of immigrants born in Italy. Overtures to fascism are not lacking either. In January, Grillo ostentatiously invited a leader of the Casapound fascist murderers to join M5S in the name of "common ideas." Roberta Lombardi quickly chimed in with a blog post in praise of early fascist ideology.

The M5S reflects the anger of the petty bourgeoisie and sectors of the working class like other populist movements that have developed in several countries over the last few years, from the Spanish and Greek Indignados to the Occupy movement in the U.S. While they have different political colorations, they all claim to represent the "99 percent" of the population against the "caste" of financiers and corrupt politicians. At the core of the liberal populist outlook is the idea that the capitalist class is divided into two sectors: those involved directly in the production and distribution of goods and services and those who get rich through financial speculation. The former are considered progressive, the latter reactionary. But this division is completely bogus in modern capitalism, which is dominated by enormous monopolies with completely intertwined financial and industrial capital. All elements of the capitalist class have a fundamental interest in common: maximizing the exploitation of the workforce while minimizing the "general" costs of social services, education and health care.

l'Unità

November 2012: Workers occupied offices of Ilva steel plant to protest threatened closure. Banner reads: "Without work, there is no future."

EPA

April 19 demonstration by immigrants in Naples, Italy.

Class Struggle Against Capitalist Austerity

To avoid being thrown back decades, the working class must engage in uncompromising class struggle against austerity and the EU that transcends national borders. There have been dozens of strikes in Greece over the last few years. Spain, Portugal and other countries have seen strike waves in airports, hospitals and the private sector. Last year, Asturian miners waged an effective battle against the police to defend the coal mine jobs in the region.

In Italy, we have yet to see an adequate class-struggle response to the attacks launched by the Monti government (and, for that matter, to the attacks against public workers by the previous Berlusconi and Brunetta government). Pension reform and the Fornero [labor] reform passed without a single strike opposing them, undermining Article 18 [a section of the Italian constitution on labor rights], which thousands of workers fought to defend in the past. There were, and still are, examples of courageous workers struggles, such as those at Ilva [a steel plant] in Taranto and at Bridgestone and in transportation, logistics and health care. The union bureaucrats, however, have made a sport of restraining and isolating these struggles. This is the fruit of betrayal by union tops who are tied to a perspective of making Italian capitalism "competitive."

The struggle at Ilva is a striking example of how two of the cornerstones of the reformist left (and the M5S)—support to the judiciary and to bourgeois environmentalism—are deeply anti-working-class. When the judiciary ordered the closure of Ilva for pollution, the left and, in part, the FIOM [Metalworkers Federation] welcomed the court order, unconcerned that thousands of workers would be thrown on the street. Never mind that Ilva workers themselves, those at the highest risk of dying from the pollution (and the horrendous working conditions), answered with strikes, rallies and occupations of the company's headquarters, correctly recognizing that defense of their jobs is a matter of survival. The leadership of the Ilva strikes was left in the hands of the [more right-wing] CISL [Italian Confederation of Workers Unions] and UIL [Italian Labor Union] bureaucrats, who (together with those from FIOM) for decades acquiesced to the company's crimes against the workers and the population.

In the last few years, the FIOM has emerged as a potential center of opposition to the capitalist attacks. There is no doubt that the FIOM, which includes the largest and most powerful sector of the Italian proletariat—centered on the metalworking industry—is a crucial stronghold of the working class. That's why many workers held great hopes when FIOM fought Fiat's campaign to destroy or tame the unions. The refusal to accept the diktats of [Fiat chief] Marchionne in the referendum at the Pomigliano plant temporarily galvanized sectors of the working class. But the FIOM tops did not organize strikes that extended to the whole auto industry and other sectors, placing faith instead in "mediation" by bourgeois politicians and the blessed intervention of the

continued on page 8

SPARTACO
Sudafrica: dopo la strage di Marikana
Vincono i minatori, si estende l'ondata di scioperi
Per un governo operaio basato sui neri!

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Italy...

(continued from page 7)

courts, which they claimed would defend FIOM's right to organize workers at Fiat. In so doing, the FIOM leadership effectively sabotaged the workers' will to fight, leaving the way open for the capitalists. In the meantime, the FIOM leadership tried to purge the most militant sectors, attempting to oust, e.g., Sergio Bellavita, a leader of the Rete 28 Aprile, from the secretariat and expelling PCL [Communist Workers Party] supporters. ***No to purging leftists from unions!***

Workers struggles must be united around a program of common class defense against the bosses and the state. The unions have been heavily undermined by their treacherous leaders, who have sacrificed workers to the interests of the capitalists and their governments. To once again become effective instruments in the struggle to defend workers, the unions must regain a class-struggle perspective. The unions were built through hard class battles waged through strikes, mass pickets and solidarity strikes in defiance of anti-strike laws and of state prosecution. It will take hard class struggle to revitalize them. And this requires a struggle to oust the current leaderships—chained to the PD and its reformist tails—and replace them with a new leadership, one that understands that the workers and capitalists have no common interests. A class-struggle leadership would play a crucial role in building a workers party that fights for a workers government.

Reformist Betrayers and Grillo, the Pied Piper

For almost 20 years, Italy has been ruled by alternating coalitions of Berlusconi on the right and popular-front coalitions around the PD and its forebears, the PDS and the DS. Rifondazione Comunista gave outside support and then participated in the capitalist governments led by the Ulivo [Olive Tree, 1996-98] and the Unione [Union, 2006-2008]. The PRC's internal oppositionists (Falcemartello and all the previous incarnations of Critical Left, the Communist Workers Party and Communist Alternative) also supported them in the elections. These popular-front governments systematically attacked the working class, immigrants and minorities, paving the way for right-wing governments. This has particularly discredited Rifondazione, whose pretense of being a "working-class" organization was blatantly exposed by the role it played in the Prodi [Ulivo and Unione] government. Thus, since its electoral defeat in 2008, the PRC has not had any seats in parliament.

Nevertheless, the PRC has continued its politics of class betrayal. In the last elections, the PRC ran as part of Rivoluzione Civile [Civic Revolution], led by former judges Antonio Di Pietro and Antonio Ingroia. The judiciary, together with the police and the army, forms the core of the capitalist state—bodies of armed men whose "job" is defending the power of the ruling class and private ownership of the means of production. They are enemies, not allies, of the workers movement. The hallmarks of Rivoluzione Civile are defense of "the rule of law" and support for judges to bring an end to corruption in the Italian political system. The politics of this coalition were so rotten that in Sicily the slate was headed by a former leader of the fascist MSI [the historic party of Italian fascism], while number two was the former chief of the SILP "union" [Italian Police Workers Union], which opposed enacting laws against torture in the aftermath of the bloody repression in Genoa in 2001 because that would undermine the honor of the police corps! No wonder this motley crew did not win a single seat in parliament!

Reuters

Romano Prodi (center), head of capitalist popular-front Ulivo government, during 1996 elections. Reformist leftists backed Ulivo, which carried out attacks on workers, immigrants.

Defending the "rule of law" and the "fight against tax evasion" are slogans that the reformist left has raised for decades as a guarantee to the bourgeoisie that they can be trusted to respect the framework of bourgeois society. Embracing these reactionary themes as their own, the M5S found fertile ground, thanks to the illusions sowed in the workers movement by the left and reformist parties.

Several reformist groups and parts of the "left-wing" union bureaucracy, such as the Rete 28 Aprile, lined up behind M5S's demagogic populism. Among Grillo & Co.'s most fervent supporters are Maoists such as CARC [Support Committees for Communist Resistance], who demanded:

> "Vote and make others vote for the Five Star Movement...the slate that has a better chance than others that have declared their opposition to the politics of social butchery, to bring oppositionists into the Parliament of the Papal Republic and disrupt the parliamentary cover of their future government."

After the vote, even Giorgio Cremaschi, head of the Rete 28 Aprile, celebrated M5S's victory, saying:

> "How could you not be satisfied with this disorder?... We must hope that the Five Star Movement understands that their victory does not reflect a specific choice, let alone the delegation of power, but it is a signal and part of the revolt that is growing throughout Europe and has finally really taken off here too.... The fact that Italian voters have finally started giving the finger to the Lords of the spread [between Italian and German bonds] should give us some confidence. And let's get ready to fight."
>
> —rete28aprile.it, 26 February

The Rete 28 Aprile did not call for a vote to the M5S because they didn't want to upset the bloc of union bureaucrats, some of whom supported Rivoluzione Civile and others the M5S. But the fact that even what passes for the "far left" in the unions couldn't decide between the judges' party and the populist charlatan Grillo is symptomatic of the political decay in which these advocates of class collaboration are mired.

Ansa

October 2012: Marco Ferrando (left), head of Communist Workers Party, and Giorgio Cremaschi (right), head of the Rete 28 Aprile, at Rome demonstration.

For the Class Independence of the Proletariat

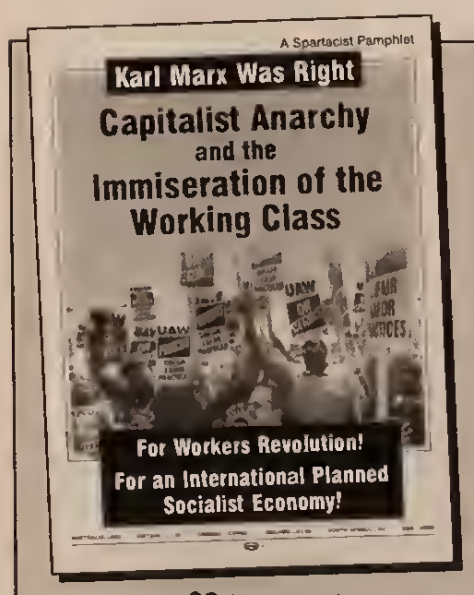
Marco Ferrando's Communist Workers Party stood out from the rest of the reformist left for its explicit hostility to M5S. After the election, the PCL declared:

> "*The elections saw the success of an old billionoire swindler (Berlusconi) and, especiolly, a millionaire comedion (Grillo).* A 'guru' who proposes, among other things (in tune with the schemes by the guru of gurus, millionaire boss Casaleggio), the outright abolition of unions ('19th century junk') precisely at the moment when labor and trade-union rights are facing the greatest attacks by the bosses. In Parma, where he is in office, Grillo increased the costs of day care and prices in cafeterias to pay interest to the banks. He demands mass firings in the public sector and the reduction of all pensions to reduce the tax burden on the bosses (by abolishing the IRAP [the regional production tax]). *Why did so many youth, so many workers, so many temporory workers, make the calamitous mistake ond end up trusting a millionoire guru who has nothing in common with their interests? Because they hod no frome of reference, no representatives, and no perspectives in the midst of the most dramatic sociol crisis in the post-war period.... Rebuilding an independent representative of the workers as on alternative to the dictatorship of industrialists and banks: this is the real necessity.*" (emphasis in the original)

Proletarian class independence from the parties of the exploiters and their state is a precondition for effective struggle against capitalist austerity and must be vote to Pisapia and De Magistris, the local puppets of the PD (and "judges' party"). Just one year ago, the PCL called for a vote to François Hollande in the second round of the French presidential elections, arguing that: "The defeat of Sarkosy [sic] and his reactionary government is a positive development and must be carried through without hesitation in the second round" (pclavoratori.it, 23 April 2012).

PCL supporters may solace themselves that these are tactical errors that one could discuss. But for us Marxists, class independence is a matter of principle. A vote for Hollande was a vote for anti-worker austerity measures and imperialist adventures that the French Socialist Party promised during the elections and carried out since it came to power. Unlike the PCL, we Trotskyists oppose, as a matter of principle, any electoral support to parties that participate in popular-front coalitions with bourgeois parties.

To break out of the long cycle of defeats and lead the working class in the inevitable struggles against capitalist austerity, we need a revolutionary party. Such a party must fight to win back the vanguard of the working class and the youth to the principles of Marxism and the fundamental understanding of the need to abolish the capitalist mode of production and replace it with a planned, socialized economy on an international scale. The first step in building this party is breaking with the tradition of class collaboration that has led to the bankruptcy of reformism and the rise of bourgeois populism. This is the perspective the Lega Trotskista d'Italia fights for. ■



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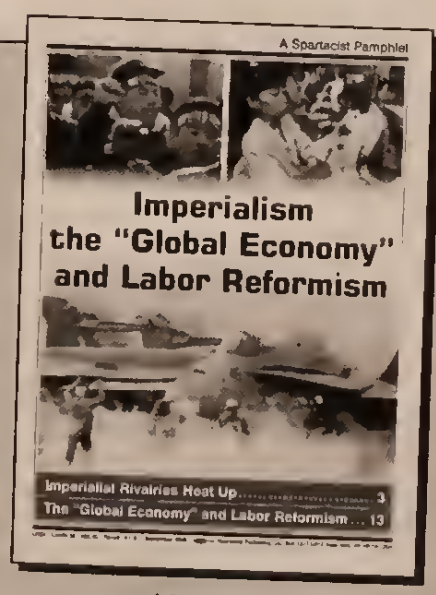

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Shakur...

(continued from page 12)

consider a terrorist is entirely self-serving. Freely roaming the beaches of Miami is Cuban CIA operative Luis Posada Carriles, the mastermind of the 1976 bombing of a Cubana airliner, which killed 73 people, as well as hotel bombings in Cuba in 1997 that killed an Italian tourist and wounded 12 other people.

On 2 May 1973, Shakur and two other former Panthers, Zayd Malik Shakur and Sundiata Acoli—then members of the Black Liberation Army—were stopped by troopers Foerster and James Harper nn the New Jersey Turnpike, supposedly for a "faulty taillight." Approaching the car, one of the cops drew his gun and ordered the three to raise their hands. A moment later, Zayd Shakur was shot dead by Harper. Foerster died in the crossfire, shot *with a bullet from a police revolver.* Assata had just been shot twice, once in the back. Acoli was convicted of killing Foerster in 1974 and sentenced to life. After standing trial six times on other charges withnut a conviction, in 1977 Assata Shakur was finally tried and convicted by an all-white New Jersey jury on grntesque charges of killing her own comrade Zayd as well as Foerster.

At their May 2 press conference, Fuentes and Fnrd repeated the lie, dutifully echoed by the bourgeois press, that Shakur "murdered a law enforcement officer execution style." This never happened, nor could it have. One of the bullets that struck Assata shattered her clavicle and median nerve, paralyzing her entire right arm. Assata's fingerprints were absent from every gun and piece of ammunition found at the scene. Neutron activation analysis taken immediately after Assata arrived at the hospital showed there was no gunpowder residue on her hands. Shakur was never convicted nf firing the shot that killed Foerster. Instead, she was railroaded to prison as an "accomplice" under a New Jersey statute that declares that if a person present at the scene of a crime can be construed as "aiding and abetting" it, she can be convicted of the crime itself.

Facebook

Sinister billboard on roadside in Newark, New Jersey, May 2013.

Assata Shakur was on the receiving end of the greatest terrorist enterprise in the world—the bloodthirsty American capitalist rulers. She and her two comrades were among the targets for assassination by the FBI and cops under the deadly Counter-Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO). In the eyes of the capitalist rulers, the great crime of the Panthers was not only proclaiming the need for a revolutionary solution to the oppression of black people but advocating the right of armed self-defense against the racist terrorists, whether in the white rohes of the KKK or the navy blue of the police. The FBI's J. Edgar Hoover labeled the Panthers the "greatest threat to the internal security of the U.S." and in 1968 vowed, "The Negro youth and moderate[s] must be made to understand that if they succumb to revolutionary teachings, they will be dead revnlutionaries." Despite our deep political differences with the Panthers, we as Marxists vigorously defended them against the capitalist state's murderous drive to crush black radicalism.

Thirty-eight Panthers were cut down, including Chicago party leader Fred Hampton, shot to death in December .1969 as he lay in his bed. Countless more were locked away for decades on frame-up charges. Foremost among them was Los Angeles Panther leader Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt), who himself survived an LAPD assassination attempt days after Hampton's murder and was later imprisoned for 27 years on frame-up charges for a murder that FBI wiretap logs cnnfirmed he could not have committed, as he was 400 miles away. Today, former Panther spokesman Mumia Abu-Jamal is cnndemned tn a life of prison hell on false charges of killing police officer Daniel Faulkner in 1981. Mumia spent 30 years on death row before his death sentence was overturned two years ago. Like Shakur, the seriously wounded Mumia could not have shot anyone: no physical evidence linked Mumia to Faulkner's killing and the courts rejected outright the evidence of innocence. In Mumia's case, the suppressed evidence included the cnnfession of the actual killer.

After the New Jersey governor put a $100,000 bounty on her head 15 years ago, Shakur stated in an open letter:

> "I am a 20th century escaped slave. Because of government persecution, I was left with no other choice than to flee from the political repression, racism and violence that dominate the US government's policy towards people of color....
>
> "This political persecution was part and parcel of the government's policy of eliminating political opponents by charging them with crimes and arresting them with no regard to the factual basis of such charges....
>
> "I guess the theory is that if they could kidnap millions of Africans from Africa 400 years ago, they should be able to kidnap one African woman today. It is nothing but an attempt to bring about the re-incarnation of the Fugitive Slave Act. All I represent is just another slave that they want to bring back to the plantation. Well, I might be a slave, but I will go to my grave a rebellious slave."

In the absence of a class-struggle leadership of labor committed to the fight for black freedom, the Panthers, their personal courage notwithstanding, rejected the only strategy for sweeping away the racist bourgenis order—socialist revolution by the multiracial proletariat. Instead, they embraced a reformist program that included the utopian call for "community control" of the police. Racist repression and cop terror will only be ended when the working class seizes state power under the leadership of a Leninist vanguard party. Hands off Assata Shakur! Free Sundiata Acoli! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! ■

USC...

(continued from page 12)

riot gear, he replied, "When USC calls us, this is how we come." In 2008, at least 75 LAPD officers in riot gear used clubs, smoke bombs, Tasers and pepper ball guns to shut down a block party. When a hundred of the partygoers held an impromptu sit-in on the street trying to hold off the police action, nine were arrested.

USC is located in South Central L.A., whose black and Latino residents are targets for the notorious LAPD. Especially over the past year, the city and campus cops have stepped up ID checks, stop-and-frisk manhandling and other daily harassment of minority students, and the university now shuts the gates to campus at 9 p.m. Through its enforcers, the USC administration is sending a message: neighborhood residents must stay out, and those black and Latino students who remain in school should understand they are second-class citizens at an enclave for the privileged (estimated annual costs for 2013 total over $62,000). Last year, blacks made up only 5 percent of USC students. We say, open the gates, open the classrooms: *for open admission and no tuition with a state-paid living stipend for all!* For the nationalization of the private universities under student-teacher-worker control—abolish the administration!

Nate Howard, the student who organized the party that was shut down, said, "Here we have LAPD who are still trying to make us live in 1963!" But it's not just USC and it's not just the cops. Black youth across the board are criminalized in this deeply racist capitalist society. Measured by quality of life, de facto segregation, chances for social advancement, etc., things for the vast majority of black people have only gotten worse since the upheaval against cop violence that shook the Watts ghetto in 1965, not far away from USC.

The deep resentment of police brutality is reflected in the sympathy among minority residents of L.A. for Christopher Dorner, the unhinged black ex-LAPD officer who was driven to homicidal vengeance against cops and their families by the racist treatment he received at the hands of his former employer. His manifesto describing the unabashed racism, corruption and sadism of the L.A. cops struck a chord for many. More than 20 years after the brutal cop beating of Rodney King, the city rulers and their media mouthpieces try to sow the myth that things have changed and there is now a kinder, gentler police force. But brutality and racial profiling can never be "reformed" out of the police. Enforcing the capitalist rulers' racist "law and order" is part of their job of ensuring that a small number of exploiters keep their hands on the vast majority of society's wealth.

The very few black students at elite private universities like USC are mainly drawn from the top echelons of black America or aspire to move into this stratum. The vast majority of white Americans, not to mention the poor and working-class residents of South Central, are priced out of this institution. While increasing numbers of ghetto youth are seen as expendable by the ruling class, capitalist society has a role for the so-called "talented tenth" of the black populatinn, as token executives in corporations, black elected officials to keep a lid on the restless masses, professionals and so on. Yet they, too, are branded by the color of their skin and liable to themselves be targeted by the cops and courts. Understandably, "We are scholars not criminals" has become a rallying cry for the USC students in the wake of the police assault.

A prime example of how the oppression of black people cuts across class lines was the arrest of distinguished black Harvard professor Henry Louis Gates Jr. outside his own home in 2009. As we observed at the time:

> "That an eminent world-class scholar—who is on a first-name basis with the president, no less—can be subjected to such patently racist abuse speaks volumes about the condition of black people in this country, and it shows how little it has been changed by Obama's election. The somber reality is that racial oppression is structurally embedded in American capitalism and will not be overcome short of socialist revolution."
>
> —"Obama's 'Change' Is More of the Same," *WV* No. 940, 31 July 2009

As revolutionary socialists, we actively fight against every manifestation of racist injustice. At the same time, the SL and Spartacus Youth Clubs seek to win students to the understanding that black freedom requires a thoroughgoing revolution made by the working class under the leadership of a Leninist vanguard party. We are looking for the few students who aim higher than their own advancement within a system of exploitation and oppression—those who seek a role in creating a completely different kind of society. ■

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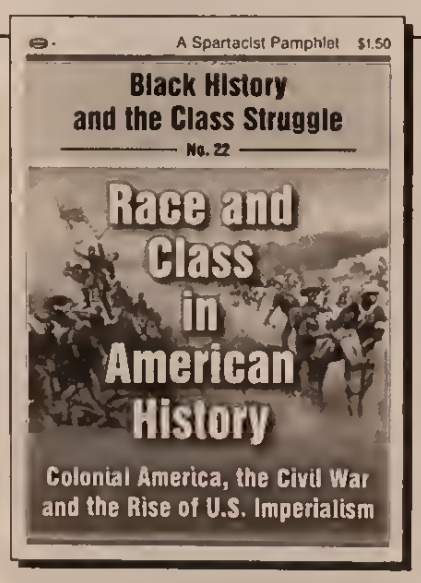

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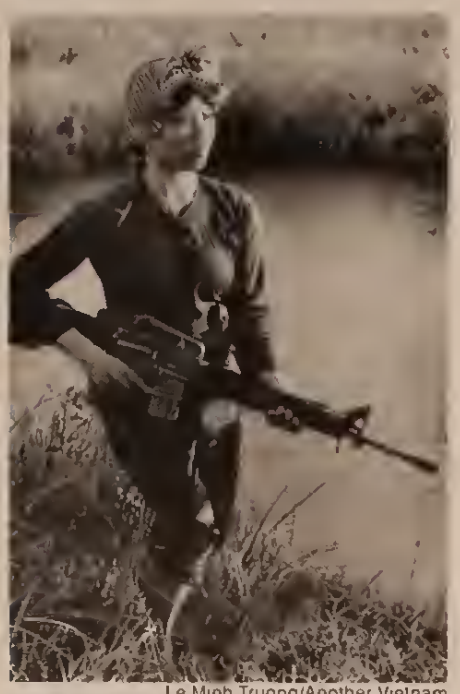
Torture...

(continued from page 1)

the heap is the American bourgeoisie, the most powerful terrorists on the planet. The U.S. rulers have dropped atomic bombs to incinerate civilians in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, napalmed Vietnamese villages and engineered Central American dirty wars to smash popular uprisings of leftist insurgents. As long as these butchers remain in power, there will be no end to the carnage. Only smashing U.S. imperialism from within through victorious workers revolution can put it out of its bloodthirsty business.

From Saigon to Baghdad: The James Steele Saga

Recently, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and the *Guardian* newspaper have highlighted the widespread torture and assassinations by the U.S. at the height of the occupation of Iraq. A BBC documentary released in March, *Searching for Steele*, recounts the central role of the U.S. in setting up and funding "Special Police Commandos" (SPC) to quell the Sunni insurgency against the occupation. These Commandos developed into Shi'ite-dominated death squads. The country descended into a sectarian civil war that by some accounts has claimed the lives of 100,000 Iraqis.



Le Minh Truong/Another Vietnam

NLF guerrilla, 1973. Heroic Vietnamese workers and peasants inflicted humiliating defeat on U.S. imperialist colossus.

A slew of recent works of investigative journalism illustrate that the machinery of U.S. state terror is passed relatively seamlessly between Democratic and Republican administrations. In a review of Jeremy Scahill's new book, *Dirty Wars: The World Is a Battlefield*, his fellow *Nation* writer Tom Engelhardt describes how imperialist Commanders-in-Chief Bush and Obama "transformed an increasingly militarized CIA, a hush-hush crew called the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC), and a shiny new 'perfect weapon' and high-tech fantasy object, the drone, into the president's own privatized military" (*Nation*, 23 April).

The BBC documentary focuses on one James Steele, an army colonel whose career shows in microcosm that, in order to intimidate and quell an entire population, the imperialists must resort to indiscriminate terror. A specialist in the dark arts of counterinsurgency, Steele is a shadowy figure who began his career during the Vietnam War. He then served in the 1980s as an adviser in the U.S. imperialists' dirty wars in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama and who knows where else in Central America, overseeing local anti-Communist death squads. For a couple of years starting in 2003, Steele was brought out of retirement to serve as a consultant to the Bush administration and U.S. military tops in Iraq.

At the outset of the occupation in 2003, the U.S. rulers disbanded the Iraqi military and attempted to build a new one from scratch. It became apparent that this was a fiasco as the new recruits began deserting and retreating en masse when confronted by effective insurgent fighters. The most sophisticated and best-organized elements of the diffuse insurgency were Sunni, exemplified by the revolt in Falluja in 2004. To counter this armed resistance, the Iraqi puppet government formed the SPC, initially made up of former members of Hussein's special forces and Republican Guard. Impressed by the caliber of these fighters, General David Petraeus—whom Obama appointed to head the CIA in April 2011—created a $2 billion fund to provide them arms, ammunition and supplies.

Drawing on his experience in Central America, Steele was called in to advise this force and help run a network of "interrogation centers" across Iraq. Former prisoners at these facilities and war logs turned over to WikiLeaks have recounted some of the methods by which prisoners were interrogated: electric shocks; rape and sexual molestation; amputations; burning with acid; beatings with shovels, cables and chains; stomping on prisoners' heads; hanging them by their hands until their shoulders were dislocated and pulling their ears with pliers. Steele had lengthy meetings with the leader of the SPC, requested that specific detainees be interrogated, and was regularly present at the main interrogation center where the machinery of torture ground on and on. The U.S. military gave its imprimatur in June 2004 when it directed troops not to investigate acts of torture by Iraqis on Iraqis.

As the insurgency grew, Washington stepped up its divide-and-rule policy, inflaming conflicts between Shi'ite and Sunni Muslims. In early 2004, the ban on Shi'ite militias joining the SPC was lifted and commandos were drawn increasingly from militias such as the Badr Brigades, which had scores to settle with the Sunnis going back at least to Hussein's brutal, decades-long rule. By the spring of 2005, the SPC was 5,000 strong and had established a fearsome reputation on the streets of Iraqi cities. In Samarra, the heart of the Sunni insurgency, the SPC conducted a citywide raid, going door-to-door and packing hundreds of people off to its torture facilities. In September 2005, Steele sent a memo to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld stating that the SPC was essentially a Shi'ite militia involved in "death squad activities"—as surely he would know.

Alongside the SPC, the secretive, elite U.S. military force known as Joint Special Operations Command was operating independently inside Iraq. A JSOC team of roughly 1,000 had entered the country before the U.S. invasion in order to hunt down "high-value targets." As the invasion got underway, the special ops forces in the war zone were given wide latitude, and JSOC engaged in wholesale massacres during the U.S. army's march to Baghdad.

Bettmann

January 1968: U.S. soldiers and Vietnamese interpreter subject suspected NLF supporter to water torture.

JSOC ran the most infamous torture facility in Iraq out of a Hussein-era military base near the Baghdad airport called Camp NAMA, an acronym for "Nasty-Ass Military Area." Prisoners brought to this facility were subjected to severe beatings, sleep deprivation, sexual humiliation, electric shocks and burns. The SPC and JSOC developed as two prongs of the imperialists' counterinsurgency strategy in Iraq, with JSOC a technologically sophisticated death squad that would become an integral part of Obama's "war on terror" around the world. Its kill list would grow accordingly.

Dirty Wars Against Communism

In pursuing their "war on terror," the U.S. imperialists have presented reactionary Islamic fundamentalist forces as the main enemy, as well as secular bourgeois-nationalist strongmen like Hussein. But for decades their overriding concern was to "roll back" Communism. From 1917, the imperialist powers sought to undo the Bolshevik-led October Revolution, which ripped one-sixth of the globe from the capitalists' grip and established the world's first workers state. Albeit subsequently degenerated under Stalinist bureaucratic rule, the Soviet Union became a powerful counterweight to the U.S. imperialists and their allies and remained so until its counterrevolutionary destruction in 1991-92.

In the 1960s and early '70s, the American ruling class waged a brutal war against workers and peasants in Vietnam as a part of its anti-Communist crusade. In that war, the U.S. military was pitted against the army of the North Vietnamese deformed workers state and the South Vietnamese National Liberation Front (NLF). The imperialists resorted to the most brutal war crimes in fighting against a *social revolution* by insurgent workers and peasants. The CIA's infamous Phoenix program—which relied on special ops forces and counterrevolutionary indigenous militias to assassinate thousands of NLF leaders and supporters—was the godfather of today's JSOC. Vietnam is where Steele got his start.

At the time, the Socialist Workers Party and other reformist groups built a liberal-pacifist antiwar movement around the slogan: "Bring our boys home." For us communists, "our boys" were the heroic NLF fighters. We Trotskyists not only called for military victory to the NLF but also demanded: "All Indochina must go communist!" While standing for the unconditional military defense of the deformed workers states, we gave no political support to the repressive, nationalist Stalinist bureaucracies. We put forward the perspective of proletarian political revolutions from Moscow to Beijing, Hanoi and Havana to bring to power leaderships committed to extending workers rule internationally, in particular to advanced industrial countries like the U.S.

U.S. efforts to crush leftist insurgents in Central America in the 1980s were colored by its having been badly mauled in Indochina. At home, the rulers had to deal with the "Vietnam syndrome," the deep hostility and distrust of the populace toward new military engagements abroad. At the same time, Washington continued to back right-wing regimes around the world. Upon taking office in 1981, Republican Ronald Reagan decreed Central America to be the front line of the new Cold War. By "drawing the line against Communism" in El Salvador, Washington was reasserting its imperialist claim to its own backyard as well as taking aim at the USSR and the Cuban deformed workers state, where capitalism was overturned following the seizure of power by Castro's forces in 1959.

Reagan's counterinsurgency campaign in El Salvador drew on the anti-Communist legacy of Democrat John F. Kennedy, who had been dead set against there being any more Cubas in this hemisphere. On Kennedy's orders, two paramilitary groups were set up: the Salvadoran National Security Agency (ANSESAL) and the Democratic Nationalist Organization (ORDEN). The former was an intelligence agency that would coordinate the country's security forces and the latter was a rural militia that would engage in surveillance and infiltration of political organizations.

Reagan's predecessor, Democratic president Jimmy Carter, had already ramped up

Wohl/Sygma, Guardian (insel)

Top: U.S.-backed Nicaraguan contra slits throat of Sandinista supporter, January 1985. Right: U.S. Colonel James Steele oversaw death squads in Central America in 1980s and torture facilities in Iraq during occupation.

Warsaw...

(continued from page 2)

at between 1,000 and 1,200. The Jews lost about 3,000 to 5,000..."

According to the most authentic accounts, Nazi occupation of the Warsaw Ghetto was not completed until 42 days after the fight began, and even months later they were meeting unexpected resistance from tiny hidden groups dug into the ruins and cellars.

Above all, it is necessary to emphasize the working class character of the resistance. The Stalinist swine and the bourgeois nationalist and religious leaders are engaged in a systematic campaign of falsification intended to obscure or deny the class struggle content of the Warsaw Ghetto revolt. While a few middle-class elements did participate, they fought under the inspiration, guidance, organization and leadership of the workers.

"Workers and the working intelligentsia are the heart and soul among the masses of fighting Jews who arose gun in hand against Nazi atrocities," states an appeal of the Polish Labor Movement issued on the second day of the revolt. "Almost all underground publications, as well as the reports of the government representative, speak of the Jewish Fighter Organization which began and led the struggle... both the appeal of the Polish Labor Movement and some newspapers indicate that the organization consisted chiefly of workers, most of them young." (S. Mendelsohn, *The Battle of the Warsaw Ghetto.*)

Underground Manifesto

An underground manifesto from Poland, issued by the Fighter Units, proclaims, "Our activity will still make it possible for a certain number of people to be spared... We live in full realization that it is our duty to proudly continue our glorious heritage of Socialist struggle." (*PM*, April 18.)

That struggle is continuing, inspired by the example of the Jewish workers of Warsaw. In Lodz, the biggest Polish industrial center, 130,000 Jewish workers went on a general strike, halting temporarily the Nazi extermination drive there. Armed rebellions have flared up through all the labor camps. A full scale armed resistance was carried on for a month by the Jews of Bialystok, where 30,000 died in struggle and where the "German losses were high despite the heavy armaments, tanks and fire-throwers thrown into the battle." (*PM*, April 18.)

Since the Warsaw battle, the British government has closed the last door of refuge for the Jews, in Palestine, while the American State Department and Roosevelt shed crocodile tears in public but deny haven to the Jews in any United States territory. Roosevelt could only mumble evasive statements about "military necessity" and "post-war" plans when asked to intercede with the British government to open Palestine once more for Jewish refugees. And on British soil, Jewish soldiers who resisted the anti-Semitic attacks imposed on them in the armed forces of the reactionary Polish exiled regime are court-martialed and given prison sentences.

Now it should be clear to the Jewish people everywhere, and to all the workers, that the capitalist "democracies" will not save the Jews from fascist barbarism. As the Jewish workers of Warsaw have demonstrated, only the workers themselves in revolutionary struggle will fight fascism to the death.

All honor to the brave Jewish worker dead, who have shown the workers everywhere the revolutionary road to freedom and socialist emancipation from capitalist reaction and fascism. When tens of millions shall rise in the manner of the heroic 40,000 worker-fighters of the Warsaw Ghetto, the forces of Nazism and capitalism will be swept away like chaff before the irresistible might of their onslaught. ■

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military aid to the Salvadoran army, which then funneled the money to ANSESAL and ORDEN. By the end of the 1970s, ANSESAL and ORDEN death squads were responsible for as many as 800 political assassinations a month. When Reagan entered the White House, he began sending rifles, grenade launchers and helicopters, as well as dispatching "advisers" to the country. Among them was James Steele, who served in El Salvador from 1984-86 as head of the U.S. special forces' MilGroup, specializing in what is euphemistically referred to as "human intelligence" and interrogation.

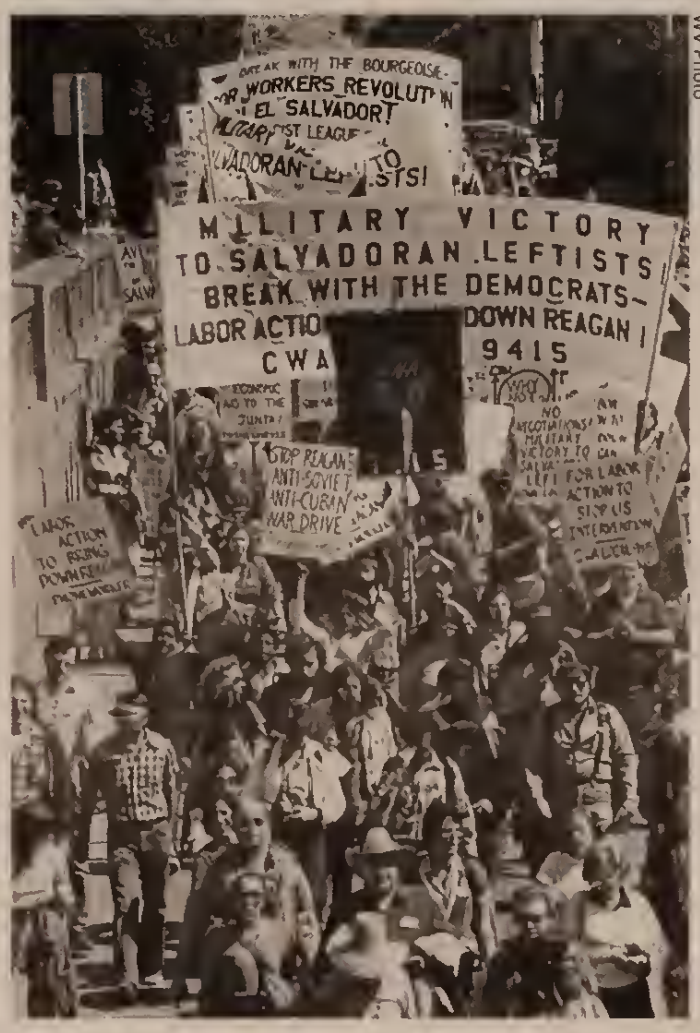
Rising social discontent in El Salvador had exploded in 1980 over the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero, seen as an advocate for the poor and oppressed. Opposition groups including peasant organizations, unions, social-democratic parties and parts of the Catholic church united to form the Faribundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), which launched a military campaign against government forces. Despite the U.S. support to the ruling junta, the FMLN was able to take control of significant parts of the country by the middle of 1981.

However, the FMLN, embracing a class-collaborationist alliance with a "progressive" wing of the Salvadoran bourgeoisie, sought a "negotiated settlement" with the death-squad regime, a demand that the reformist Workers World Party in the U.S. supported at the time. The leftist insurgents did not fight under the banner of communism, but they were in an armed conflict with U.S.-backed military juntas and counterrevolutionary terrorists. We demanded: Military victory to leftist insurgents! Defense of Cuba and USSR begins in El Salvador! The leftist forces eventually signed a sellout, U.S.-brokered settlement in 1992, an accommodation to the post-Soviet "new world order."

As the civil war raged in El Salvador, the U.S. imperialists were involved in another dirty war in nearby Nicaragua, this time supplying the opponents of the government. The petty-bourgeois leftist Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) had overthrown the blood-drenched dynasty of Luis Somoza in 1979, shattering the capitalist state and objectively opening the road to a social revolution. They instituted significant social reforms, including nationalizing the property of Somoza and his cronies, which amounted to as much as 40 percent of the economy. But the Sandinistas, who never espoused an anti-capitalist program, formed a coalition government with elements of the bourgeoisie and maintained a "mixed economy," which meant that the capitalists were never destroyed as a class. Defense of the Nicaraguan revolution required completing it by overthrowing capitalist rule and extending the revolution throughout Latin America and to the U.S. imperialist behemoth.

The U.S. provided massive aid to the right-wing contra insurgents, some of the most vicious reactionaries in the region, to overthrow the Sandinista government. Washington also worked hand in hand with the likes of Guatemala's General Efraín Ríos Montt, who was recently found guilty of genocide and other crimes against humanity by a court in that country. The 1986 Iran/contra scandal brought to light that U.S. military officials were shipping guns to the Iranian government and using the proceeds to fund the contras, explicitly violating Congressional bans. Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North, the main Reagan administration figure implicated, was using Ilopango Airport in El Salvador to ship weapons and supplies to the contras. Steele ran operations at this very airport.

With the U.S. bankrolling the contras, the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie was able to reassert control a decade later, defeating the revolution. Today's Sandinista and FMLN leaders serve as openly bourgeois politicians at the head of their respective capitalist states.



WV Photo

Oakland, 1982: Spartacist-initiated Anti-Imperialist Contingent at El Salvador protest.

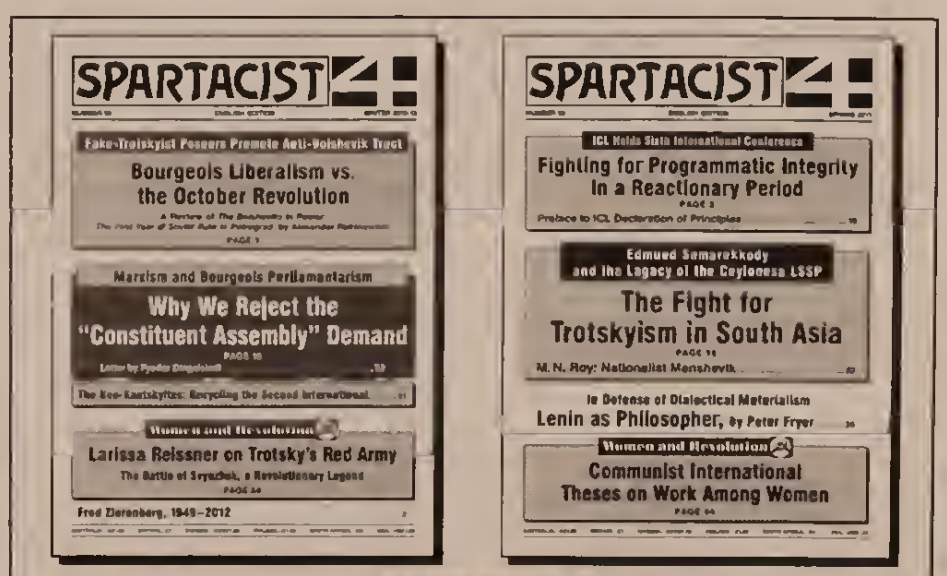
For Workers Revolution in the Belly of the Beast!

The current mindset of the U.S. imperialist overlords was expressed by a JSOC operative who spoke with Jeremy Scahill: "The world is a battlefield and we are at war. Therefore the military can go wherever they please and do whatever it is that they want to do, in order to achieve the national security objectives of whichever administration happens to be in power" (*Dirty Wars*). Today in Afghanistan, the widespread atrocities committed by the U.S./NATO occupiers have the local population seething. With anger mounting at the routine killing, abduction and torture of Afghans, the American puppet government in Kabul took the extraordinary step of barring U.S. special forces from Wardak province earlier this year. Afghan authorities subsequently issued an arrest warrant on murder and torture charges for an American linked to those operations. With its overwhelming military might, it is a lot easier for the U.S. to bomb its perceived enemies into oblivion than to establish a stable regime to its liking.

The rulers of decaying U.S. capitalist society are plenty dangerous. But they are also dependent on the labor of the working class for their profits. Our task as revolutionaries is to win workers to opposing their "own" rulers who rain terror down on the oppressed masses of neocolonial countries as they ramp up the rate of exploitation and trample on democratic rights at home. At the time of the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, we called for the military defense of these countries without giving any political support to the reactionary, woman-hating Talihan cutthroats or the capitalist dictatorship of Saddam Hussein.

Today, we say that every blow struck against the imperialist occupiers in Afghanistan is in the interests of the world working class. But the blows are often just as likely to be aimed at rival religious communities, nationalities, women and human enlightenment in general. We demand the immediate removal of all U.S. troops from Afghanistan and call for class struggle at home against the imperialist mass murderers.

For the liberals, each new atrocity is an aberration or policy mistake that can be fixed by putting the right person in office or tinkering with the massive machinery of death and terror. But no amount of reforms will put an end to imperialist barbarism. The road forward for the liberation of the world's peoples is smashing U.S. imperialism through victorious workers revolution. This perspective demands the building of a workers party—independent of and opposed to both the Democratic and Republican parties of capital—to lead the struggle for workers power. Only then can the unspeakable crimes of imperialism be redressed and its barbaric practices at long last consigned to the dustbin of history. ■



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WORKERS VANGUARD

FBI's Racist "Anti-Terror" Vendetta Against Assata Shakur

Although the government largely succeeded in destroying the Black Panther Party decades ago, the state vendetta against these courageous fighters for black freedom is not only alive and well, but thriving under the administration of the first black president and attorney general. To great fanfare, two weeks ago the FBI named Assata Shakur (formerly known as Joanne Chesimard) as the first woman to be placed on the FBI's list of "Most Wanted Terrorists." Shakur was convicted in 1977 on frame-up murder charges in the shooting death of New Jersey state trooper Werner Foerster on 2 May 1973 and sentenced to life plus 33 years. Shakur escaped from prison in 1979, and five years later was granted political asylum in the Cuban deformed workers state, where she has resided for the past 29 years.

Declaring a 65-year-old grandmother one of the world's deadliest "terrorists" may have many scratching their heads and wondering what the Feds are smoking. But this is deadly serious. At a May 2 press conference, the Feds and New Jersey State Police announced they were doubling the bounty on Shakur to $2 million. In an unprecedented move, the FBI placed billboards with her likeness, reading "Wanted: Terrorist Joanne Chesimard a/k/a Assata Shakur," along New Jersey highways.

Given that Shakur is unlikely to pop up in Newark or Jersey City any time soon, this may seem a bit gratuitous—but that's hardly the point. Cloaking the decades-long vendetta against Assata Shakur in the guise of the current "war on terrorism" has a dual purpose: to settle the score against those who fought for black freedom over 40 years ago and to warn that radical activity would be treated as "domestic terrorism." It underscores what we have insisted since the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon—that the ultimate target of the vast "anti-terror" arsenal will be labor, blacks and radical youth. Indeed, the Democratic administration of Barack Obama has accelerated the use of anti-terror laws against leftists. The renewed vendetta against Shakur is particularly ominous coming on the heels of the April 15 Boston Marathon bombing, which was seized on by the bloody capitalist rulers to further enhance their vast repressive powers.

Facebook

Assata Shakur

The FBI/cop crusade is nothing but a racist political witchhunt with a drawn gun. New Jersey State Police Superintendent Rick Fuentes railed, "From her safe haven in Cuba, Chesimard has been given the pulpit to preach and profess, stirring supporters and groups to mobilize against the United States by any means necessary." Aaron T. Ford, special agent in charge of the FBI Newark Division, complained that in Cuba Shakur has continued to espouse her "anti-U.S. views" in speeches advocating "revolution and terrorism," and ludicrously added that she may have connections to international terrorist organizations. He added: "She's a danger to the American government."

The State Department seized on the FBI announcement to make clear that Cuba will remain on its list of "state sponsors of terrorism," one of the many pretexts for the continued embargo of the tiny island, where capitalist rule was overthrown 53 years ago. As always, whom the U.S. capitalist rulers

continued on page 9

USC: Riot Cops Raid Black Student Party

James/Daily Trojan

Young Spartacus

Left: L.A. cops rampage against USC students at largely black and Latino party, May 4. Right: Students at campus protest against racist cop brutality, May 6.

LOS ANGELES—In the early morning hours on May 4, University of Southern California (USC) students celebrating the end of classes were attending two off-campus parties across the street from each other. One party attracted mainly white students, the other mostly black and Latino students. When cops responded to complaints of noise, the former gathering was "treated with respect," according to one participant, while the other was treated to a phalanx of 79 fully armed cops in riot gear, with a helicopter hovering overhead. The students "were herded like animals, beaten, arrested, insulted, and quite frankly, abused," said one partygoer. It made no difference that the party had been registered with the university and that student IDs were checked at the door. Cops piled on top of students and assaulted them, inflicting multiple injuries. Six students were arrested and jailed overnight. "They were acting like they were going to war with us," said Jason Sneed, one of the arrested black students. Now free on bail, they still face trumped-up charges, such as failing to disperse and interfering with the police. We demand: ***drop all the charges!***

This cop rampage was a direct provocation against minority students, intended to send a graphic message of intimidation. But it did not go down without protest. On May 6, more than a hundred students held a sit-in on campus. The next day, at an open forum moderated by members of the USC administration and the LAPD, the 1,200-seat ballroom could not hold all the students, community members and alumni of all races who showed up to protest the cop attack, including attendees from both of the parties. For the campus administration, the forum was, in the words of an organizer, "an attempt at reconciliation and at collaboration" designed to head off any further protest. The LAPD, naturally, blamed the victims of the police brutality by claiming that "a can or bottle was thrown" and brazenly denying that the cop rampage was "race-based." But when the LAPD's South Bureau commander Bill Scott asked, "How many people—just by a show of hands—think this incident was based on race?" the hands of virtually everybody in the room shot up. One woman asked if she could raise two.

The events of May 4 were the latest in a string of police assaults and harassment of black and Latino students at USC. Just one month before, a party hosted by minority students was shut down by riot cops filling nine squad cars. When a student had the temerity to question a cop about his full

continued on page 9

WORKERS VANGUARD

50¢

No. 1025 31 May 2013

Imperialists Fuel Communalist Slaughter

Syria: Trip Wire for Regional Conflagration

AFP

Reuters

Left: In May 25 speech broadcast in Lebanon, Shi'ite Hezbollah leader Sheik Hasan Nasrallah commits to fight to keep Syrian president Assad in power. Right: Militiamen near Ramadi, Iraq, center of Sunni insurgency, in May.

MAY 27—The two-year-old civil war in Syria, pitting Sunni rebels against the regime of Bashar al-Assad, an Alawite, is threatening to escalate into a Near East-wide communal war extending from Lebanon, through Syria and across Iraq. Israeli airstrikes against Syrian military installations in early May were a further indication of the regionalization of the conflict. In turn, the Israeli raids galvanized the Shi'ite fundamentalist Hezbollah, which is essentially the state power in parts of Lebanon. Already heavily involved in the Syrian conflict, Hezbollah militiamen have recently joined Syrian government troops in a major offensive to retake Qusayr. The fierce fighting for that strategic Syrian town on the Lebanese border has triggered renewed sectarian bloodshed between Sunnis and Alawites in Tripoli in northern Lebanon. Meanwhile, large quantities of arms supplied to anti-Assad rebels by Saudi Arabia and Qatar with the approval of the imperialists are flowing to Sunni fundamentalist forces in Iraq. Iran, whose main Arab ally is Syria, looms large in the calculations of the imperialists, the Zionist rulers and the Gulf states.

In the past several months, Iraq has also again been engulfed in sectarian warfare pitting forces in and around the Shi'ite-dominated government of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki against an array of Sunni militias. Casualties have mounted steeply since the beginning of the year in a resurgence of the interethnic bloodletting in Iraq unleashed by the 2003 U.S. imperialist invasion and subsequent occupation.

Ironically, the U.S. occupation installed a Shi'ite-dominated regime in Iraq that is now tied to Iran. The Israelis see Iran as attempting to challenge their monopoly of nuclear arms in the region, as do their U.S. imperialist allies who have subjected the country to increasingly punishing sanctions. Although the Iranian government denies that it is developing nuclear weapons, Iran clearly needs nukes to defend itself against the imperialists. We demand: Down with the sanctions against Iran and Syria!

U.S. Hands Off!

Reuters

Secretary of State John Kerry meets with then-Syrian National Coalition president Mouaz al-Khatib in Rome, February 28, together with officials from Turkey and Qatar.

As Seumas Milne observed in a London *Guardian* article (7 May) following the recent Israeli airstrikes, which were the largest Israeli offensive against Syria since the 1973 Arab-Israeli war:

> "It is Syria's role as the pivot of Iranian influence across the Middle East that has turned the Syrian war into a potential regional conflagration.
>
> "Having hedged its bets, Israel has now started to make clear it regards the prospect of Islamist and jihadist groups taking over from the Assad regime as less threatening than the existing 'Syria-Iran-Hezbollah axis', as the Israeli defence ministry official Amos Gilad put it recently."

The imperialist powers, whose global "war against terror" has taken the lives of countless victims, are throwing their lot in with the reactionary Sunni fundamentalists who dominate the Syrian opposition forces. For over a year, the U.S. imperialists have provided financial support and "non-lethal" aid to the Sunni insurgents in Syria. Today, under pressure from France and Britain, both of which last year mooted the possibility of imposing a "no-fly" zone over Syria, the European Union (EU) ended its weapons embargo on Syria so that EU powers can help arm the rebels. The U.S. and European imperialists have imposed a broad range of economic sanctions on Syria, whose main casualties have been working people, especially the poor, the sick and the aged.

The Obama administration recently began talking about providing direct military aid to the rebels when anti-Assad forces—without a shred of evidence—accused the regime of using sarin gas on the population. Previously, Obama had declared that the use of chemical weapons would be viewed as a "red line" by his administration. Yet while upping its support to the rebel forces, the White House has been far from eager to intervene directly into the Syrian quagmire. More broadly, there is little popular support in the U.S. for military intervention in Syria.

The rulers of the imperialist countries are directly responsible for the conflagration that is erupting in the Near East. Syria, Lebanon and Iraq are not nations but rather patchworks of different peoples and ethnicities that, following the First World War, were carved out of the collapsing Ottoman Empire by the British and French imperialists. In the secret Sykes-Picot treaty of 1916, France took Syria (including present-day Lebanon) for itself while Britain acquired Jordan and Palestine—all against the wishes of their inhabitants (see "Syrian Civil War: Legacy of Imperialist Divide-and-Rule," *WV* No. 1009, 28 September 2012). The publication of the treaty by the Soviet workers state in late 1917 exposed the imperialist intrigues and had an electrifying effect, helping to spark a series of

continued on page 10

Zionism Betrayed Holocaust Victims, Jewish Refugees

The following contribution was submitted to Workers Vanguard *by Spartacist League Central Committee member Reuben Samuels.*

Commentary

I appreciated Art Preis' moving 1944 article "Warsaw Ghetto Anti-Nazi Uprising of Labor," reprinted in *WV* No. 1024, 17 May. Originally published in the *Militant*, newspaper of the then-revolutionary Socialist Workers Party (SWP), the article rightly slammed Britain as well as the U.S. and other imperialist "democracies" for shutting their borders to Jewish refugees fleeing Hitler's "Final Solution." Britain also prevented desperate Jews with nowhere else to go from reaching Palestine after promising them a "homeland" there in the 1917 Balfour Declaration as part of its divide-and-rule strategy for conquering the Arab Near East. Captured refugees who had made it to Palestine were shipped off to internment camps in the far reaches of the British Empire, such as Mauritius and Cyprus. Indeed, the Soviet Union was the only country to open its doors to Jewish refugees en masse, providing sanctuary for the overwhelming majority of the 2.5 million Jews who succeeded in fleeing the Nazis.

In his article, Preis wrote: "Since the Warsaw battle, the British government has closed the last door of refuge for the Jews, in Palestine, while the American State Department and Roosevelt shed crocodile tears in public but deny haven to the Jews in any United States territory. Roosevelt could only mumble evasive statements about 'military necessity' and 'post-war' plans when asked to intercede with the British government to open Palestine once more for Jewish refugees." This statement might leave the false impression that the SWP supported the Zionist project of mass Jewish emigration to Palestine. On the contrary, the SWP stood with Lenin's Bolsheviks in implacable opposition to Zionism and its scheme to carve a "Jewish homeland" out of the indigenous Palestinian Arab nation. In a 1920 resolution titled "The slogan of the Jewish proletariat must be 'Hands off Palestine!'," the Central Bureau of Jewish Sections of the Communist Party of Russia declared:

> "Jews are being provocatively identified as initiators and culprits in the parceling out of Arab lands among the victorious powers [of World War I], including the handing over of Palestine to Britain. This identification serves British imperialism in Palestine and throughout the East as a means to ignite national passions among the working people of the East and to sow hatred between Arabs and Jews.... Such a policy is a direct violation of the rights of the Arab working masses in their struggle for independence and for complete possession of the land and of all the products of their labor."
>
> —reprinted in *To See The Dawn: Baku, 1920—First Congress of the Peoples of the East*, 1993

Under capitalism, peoples that have fled Europe to escape persecution and colonize less-developed regions of the world—for example, the Huguenots in South Africa (French Protestants absorbed into the Afrikaner population) or European Jewry in Israel—often turn the very weapons of the persecution inflicted upon them against the native populations they encounter. Entirely in keeping with the Nazi exterminators of the Jewish people, Israel was established on the *blut und boden* (blood and soil) principle of being a solely Jewish state lusting for Arab-free *lebensraum* (living space).

In a series of articles that denounced the refusal of American Jewish leaders to support the call for the U.S. to open its doors to refugees from Nazi persecution in 1938, SWP leader Felix Morrow wrote, prophetically, "Under what conditions, then, can one envisage a Jewish Palestine? Obviously only two: (1) By agreement with the Arabs, who inhabit not only Palestine but the Near East; or (2) by driving the Arabs out of Palestine with fire and sword" ("Blind Alleys for the Jewish People," *Socialist Appeal*, 17 December 1938). Morrow added: "Without British bayonets, the Jews today would be driven out of Palestine by the Arabs. Jewish colonization in Palestine continues only thanks to British imperialism."

One month before his assassination in August 1940, Leon Trotsky was even more blunt: "The attempt to solve the Jewish question through the migration of Jews to Palestine can now be seen for what it is, a tragic mockery of the Jewish people.... The future development of military events may well transform Palestine into a bloody trap for several hundred thousand Jews."

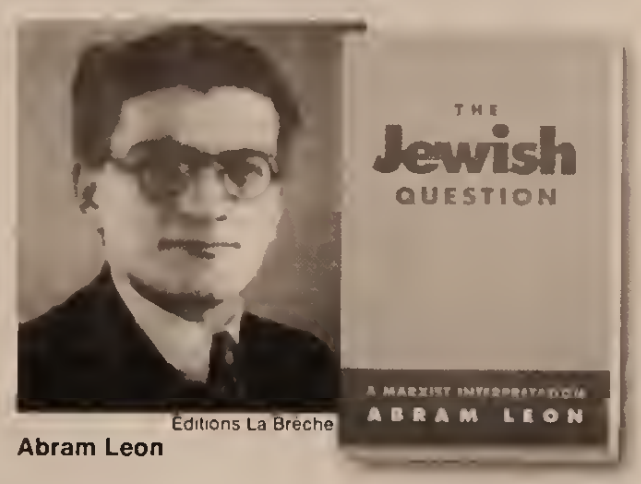
In the immediate aftermath of the November 1938 *Kristallnacht* pogroms in Germany, the SWP spearheaded a nationwide labor-centered campaign demanding *unrestricted immigration* for the hundreds of thousands of refugees from Nazi terror then besieging American embassies in Europe as well as those who would surely follow. The 17 December 1938 issue of *Socialist Appeal* reported on a meeting earlier that month of 100 delegates representing 35 CIO industrial unions that unanimously adopted a resolution calling on President Roosevelt and the State Department "to immediately offer asylum in the United States by lifting all restrictions and quota limitations to the refugee victims of Fascism." Even that quota, according to a recent *Los Angeles Times* op-ed (7 April), "was less than 25% filled during most of the Hitler era, because the Roosevelt administration piled on so many extra requirements for would-be immigrants."

In their campaign to rescue the surviving victims of the Nazi genocide, the SWP and its anti-fascist allies had to fight not only the Roosevelt administration but also the American and world Zionist movement! American Jewish leaders were bitterly denounced in a January 1943 appeal from Polish Jews: "The survivors of the Jews in Poland live with the awareness that in the worst days of our history you have given us no aid." In *Zionism in the Age of the Dictators* (1983), Lenni Brenner exposed how such organizations as Chaim Weizmann's World Zionist Organization and Rabbi Stephen Wise's American Jewish Congress (AJC) ***opposed the rescue of European Jewry.*** These groups wanted to save only "the chosen few"—those young, healthy and ambitious enough to forge a racialist Jewish statelet in the Arab

continued on page 8

Getty

British detention camp for Jewish refugees, Cyprus, 1946.



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Abram Leon

The Promise of a Socialist Society

TROTSKY

LENIN

In the selection below, Friedrich Engels makes plain how proletarian revolution opens the road to an emancipated future in which the productive powers of humanity are unleashed for the benefit of all mankind.

Their political and intellectual bankruptcy is scarcely any longer a secret to the bourgeoisie themselves. Their economic bankruptcy recurs regularly every ten years. In every crisis, society is suffocated beneath the weight of its own productive forces and products, which it cannot use, and stands helpless face to face with the absurd contradiction that the producers have nothing to consume, because consumers are wanting. The expansive force of the means of production bursts the bonds that the capitalist mode of production had imposed upon them. Their deliverance from these bonds is the one precondition for an unbroken, constantly accelerated development of the productive forces, and therewith for a practically unlimited increase of production itself....

With the seizing of the means of production by society, production of commodities is done away with, and, simultaneously, the mastery of the product over the producer. Anarchy in social production is replaced by systematic, definite organisation. The struggle for individual existence disappears.... Man's own social organisation, hitherto confronting him as a necessity imposed by nature and history, now becomes the result of his own free action. The extraneous objective forces that have hitherto governed history pass under the control of man himself. Only from that time will man himself, with full consciousness, make his own history—only from that time will the social causes set in movement by him have, in the main and in a constantly growing measure, the results intended by him. It is humanity's leap from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom.

To accomplish this act of universal emancipation is the historical mission of the modern proletariat. To thoroughly comprehend the historical conditions and thus the very nature of this act, to impart to the now oppressed class a full knowledge of the conditions and of the meaning of the momentous act it is called upon to accomplish, this is the task of the theoretical expression of the proletarian movement, scientific socialism.

—Friedrich Engels, *Anti-Dühring* (1878)

CORRECTIONS

In our article "U.S. Imperialism's Machinery of Torture" (*WV* No. 1024, 17 May), we misspelled the name of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) of El Salvador. In the same article, we referred to the overthrow of the "blood-drenched dynasty of Luis Somoza in 1979." While Luis Somoza Debayle was part of the Somoza dynasty in Nicaragua, holding power in the 1950s and '60s, it was his brother Anastasio Somoza Debayle who was overthrown in 1979.

WORKERS VANGUARD

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The closing date for news in this issue is May 28.

No. 1025 **31 May 2013**

Remember the MOVE Massacre

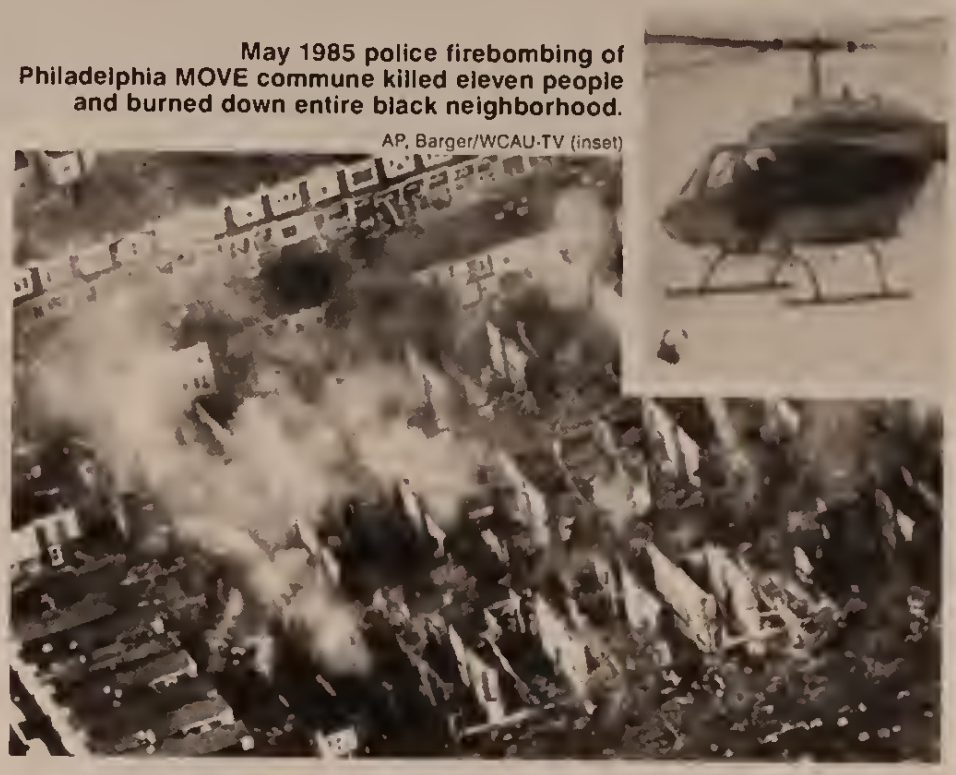
May 1985 Bombing: Racist State Terror

On 13 May 1985, the Philadelphia police, with the cooperation of Pennsylvania State Police and the FBI, consciously carried out racist state murder. Acting on the orders of black Democratic mayor Wilson Goode and the Reagan White House, the cops dropped a satchel with C-4 explosives onto the MOVE organization's Osage Avenue home. The explosion and ensuing firestorm killed eleven black people, including five children, and destroyed an entire city block, leaving hundreds homeless. The bombing capped a 12-hour cop siege during which over 10,000 rounds of ammunition were fired into the house. Firefighters were prevented by police from tackling the blaze for more than an hour, and the cops shot at anyone trying to escape the inferno. There were only two survivors: 13-year-old Birdie Africa and Ramona Africa, who was sent to prison for seven years for the "crime" of still being alive.

This massacre was the culmination of years of police harassment, beatings and hundreds of arrests of members of this mostly black back-to-nature commune known for denouncing "the system" and defending its right to armed self-defense. In August 1978, 600 Philly cops had surrounded and attacked MOVE's Powelton Village compound, unleashing a barrage of gunfire. Nine MOVE members were framed up and sentenced to between 30 and 100 years in prison after a cop was killed in the ferocious police crossfire.

May 1985 police firebombing of Philadelphia MOVE commune killed eleven people and burned down entire black neighborhood.

AP, Barger/WCAU-TV (inset)



Merle Africa died in prison in 1998; the others are still locked away in Pennsylvania's prison hellholes.

While covering the trial of the MOVE 9, Mumia Abu-Jamal became a MOVE supporter. A former Black Panther and Philadelphia journalist known as the "Voice of the Voiceless," Mumia was framed for the December 1981 killing of police officer Daniel Faulkner and sentenced to death for his political views. Mumia was confined to death row for 30 years before his sentence was overturned two years ago, but his conviction still stands. For him it is now the "slow death row" of life in prison. *Free all the MOVE prisoners! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the racist death penalty!*

A new documentary about the MOVE bombing, *Let the Fire Burn*, premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival in New York in April, winning a Special Jury mention for a first documentary. The filmmaker, Jason Osder, watched the bombing live on television as a child and was spurred to make the documentary because he was horrified that people of his generation didn't remember the events of 13 May 1985. Although Osder's film is a welcome exposé, it makes an unwelcome attempt at being evenhanded. There are no two sides to an atrocity. In a Q&A with the filmmaker at the screening, a supporter of the Partisan Defense Committee stressed that the bombing was "*not* a confrontation between extremists and authority but between the oppressed and the oppressors."

The MOVE bombing belongs to the long history of murderous capitalist state repression against workers, the oppressed and groups deemed "deviant." We will not forget the 1921 aerial bombing of the black neighborhood in Tulsa, Oklahoma, or the 1993 massacre of the integrated Branch Davidian movement in Waco, Texas. These and other atrocities evoke the terror meted out by U.S. imperialism in its wars far from home.

The state branded MOVE "terrorist" to justify its mass murder, the signature of the Reagan years. With the "war on terror," this pretext has become a fixture in the arsenal targeting those who stand up against the depredations of the capitalist rulers, not least black people. In this society, the entire state apparatus is racist to the core, as witnessed by "stop and frisk" and the massive numbers of black men in prison. Anti-black oppression has been the very bedrock of American capitalism since its foundation on the backs of chattel slaves seized from Africa.

On the 28th anniversary of the MOVE bombing, we again seek to etch this atrocity into the collective memory of the working class and oppressed. Workers revolution will avenge the MOVE martyrs. *For black liberation through socialist revolution!* ■

Letters

On the Korean War

14 April 2013

Dear *Workers Vanguard*,

The article "Chinese Stalinists: Running Dogs for Imperialist Drive Against North Korea" (*WV* No. 1020, 22 March) is a good article. However, the article states, "That war [in Korea] was launched by an imperialist invasion led by the U.S. in an attempt to smash social revolution." This is only partially accurate. U.S. imperialism's invasion was preceded by a civil war (dubbed a "national liberation war" by Kim Il Sung) that erupted in June 1950 when the North Korean army crossed the 38th parallel. That line had been drawn by the U.S. in 1945 out of fear that the Soviet Union would advance into the southern part of the peninsula following Japanese imperialism's defeat at the end of World War II. At the time, Moscow immediately agreed to the division of the peninsula.

The North Korean army reached Seoul within a week, pushing aside South Korean forces that had been trained by the Japanese imperialists. In 1994, the Spartacist Group Japan wrote the article "Defend North Korea Against Imperialist Provocations!" in which we noted: "When North Korean troops advanced south in 1950 they were welcomed as liberators; popular support for the Northern side was often expressed in strike action" (reprinted in *WV* No. 602, 10 June 1994). The South Korean masses hated the reactionary Syngman Rhee government. Supported by American imperialism as well as the UN, this puppet regime sought to smash the North Korean deformed workers state.

Democratic Party president Harry Truman's government was upset and caught off guard by the sudden onslaught of the North Korean army. Truman authorized war against the North on June 27 and on September 15 U.S. forces carried out an invasion in the name of the UN, landing at Inchon. By then, the North Korean army had already advanced near Busan (formerly Pusan), a city on the southern coast of the peninsula. The U.S. invasion inflicted a big defeat on the North Korean army, cutting off its military supplies and forcing it to retreat north.

The North Korean army was very brave and heroic. In 1949, it had been reinforced with tens of thousands of Korean troops who had fought together with the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA). These troops were combat-hardened and efficient. Mao Zedong had agreed to their transfer back to Korea more for economic reasons than out of concern for the defense of North Korea and the extension of its revolution. By that time, he considered the PLA's war against the bourgeois-nationalist Guomindang basically won and thought the Korean troops would become an unnecessary economic burden on the Chinese workers state. The battle experience acquired by these troops while fighting in China—shown also in military skirmishes between the North and South, particularly in August 1949, when the North came out on top—made it possible for the North Korean army to reach Seoul as quickly as it did.

The North's advance represented an opportunity to carry out a social revolution in the capitalist South. There was a space of almost three months between the North's initiative at the end of June and the U.S. invasion on September 15. In the meantime, Moscow and Beijing hoped the U.S. military would not intervene.

In Japan, the leadership of the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) refused to defend North Korea. But about 4,000 Korean members of the JCP demanded that North Korea be defended to the death. After the war, the JCP lost all its Korean members, who went on to form Chosen Soren. Today, JCP leader Tetsuzo Fuwa and other reformists like the Kakehashi group denounce North Korea for having crossed the 38th parallel. We defend the North Korean advance as progressive because it posed the possibility of driving American imperialism, as well as the UN forces, out of the peninsula and overthrowing the South Korean capitalist class.

Comradely,
Tsukioka

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On the Lockdown of Boston

[Received 13 May 2013]

Dear comrades,

I am writing to you in regards to the Workers Vanguard article: "In Wake of Boston Bombing—Ominous Display of Police-State Powers." [See *WV* No. 1023, 3 May 2013.]

I live in the Brighton area of Boston and wish to comment on the events involved in the incidents in the wake of the bombings.

People here have commented on that when the police searched door to door. Those who refused were handcuffed and held down while the police ransacked their homes. People complained that this was a violation of their Fourth Amendment rights not realizing that the capitalist police and courts don't give a damn about civil rights.

Most of the day the city was on lock down. I went out for about ten minutes and a few people in my neighborhood also ignored the order. People basically went out to find a food store open, fortunately some were open. This was mostly people who were poor, living in the warehouses known as the projects.

An open secret was that the state and city governments recently received from the federal government high capacity automatic weapons with hundreds of hollow tip armor piercing bullets. They were just looking forward to testing them out.

The local authorities and the bourgeois press have been milking the bombings ever since, especially the politicians running to fill John Kerry's senate seat.

Your article was quite accurate and right on the money.

Comradely,
Alan N.

IG Chokes on Defense of Mexican Teachers Union

For the last few months, teachers throughout Mexico have been mobilizing against the newly enacted education "reform" law that attacks union control over hiring and imposes continual evaluations of teachers, thereby threatening to do away with permanent positions. This legislation was a centerpiece of the "Pact for Mexico," an agreement between President Enrique Peña Nieto of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), the right-wing clericalist National Action Party (PAN) and the populist-nationalist Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD). Late last month, protesters in Chilpancingo, the capital of the state of Guerrero, stormed the offices of the PRI, PAN and PRD, outraged by the state congress's adoption of a bill that reproduces the terms of the federal anti-union education "reform." Four protest leaders have since been arrested on an array of charges, including "terrorism." The entire labor movement must demand: Drop all charges against the Guerrero protesters!

The government had already sent a clear message that it was prepared to quell any opposition to the "reform" when in late February it arrested Elba Esther Gordillo Morales, longtime leader of the National Union of Education Workers (SNTE), the largest union in Latin America. A trusted ally of the Mexican rulers who was installed as SNTE head in 1989 by PRI president Carlos Salinas, Gordillo was charged with money laundering and links to "organized crime." Gordillo is in fact a professional thug, widely hated for her lavish corruption and murderous violence against dissident union members. But this is certainly not why she is being prosecuted by the state that she has loyally served for decades.

Gordillo's arrest is a direct attack on the teachers union and the entire Mexican labor movement, part of the bourgeoisie's agenda to dismantle the unions and ram through privatizations to make Mexican capitalism more "competitive." This is what is behind both the destruction of the SME electrical workers union in 2009 and the on-and-off push to dismantle the oil workers union at state-owned PEMEX. Calls to jail the oil workers' leader have been issued by a leader of the Movement for National Regeneration (Morena), which is led by former PRD presidential candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador.

The issue is clear-cut for revolutionary Marxists, who oppose on principle any intrusion of the capitalist state into the trade unions, the basic defense organizations of the working class. As our comrades of the Grupo Espartaquista de México stated in a leaflet titled "Hands Off Mexican Teachers Union!" (see *WV* No. 1019, 8 March): "State intervention into the unions has nothing to do with 'democratizing' them; the bourgeoisie's goal is to place them ever more firmly under its control. Defending the union movement must include the demand for the ***immediate release of Gordillo and all arrested union officials***." The workers must clean their own house by ousting the pro-capitalist labor bureaucrats and replacing them with a new leadership based on a program of class struggle and the independence of the unions from the bourgeois state.

El Universal

SNTE leader Elba Esther Gordillo at hearing in Mexico City prison in February, one day after her arrest.

The elementary need to defend the SNTE against capitalist attack is anathema to the bulk of the Mexican left, which typically derides unions affiliated to the PRI in favor of those in the camp of its "progressive" bourgeois rival, the PRD. Forming one of the puddles in this swamp is the Internationalist Group (IG), an outfit led by defectors from the International Communist League. In "Labor Cop Gordillo Busted to Crush Teachers' Resistance" (*Internationalist*, March 2013), the IG makes the obvious point that "Gordillo was the perfect target in order to promote Peña Nieto's privatization agenda." But while the IG demands "Hands off the teachers," it ***refuses to defend their union***, writing off the SNTE as purely "a state institution, a labor police agency whose purpose is to prop up the regime and regiment the workers." You can't have it both ways: either you defend the union under attack, despite its brutal, pro-capitalist leadership, or you add grist to the union-busters' mill.

Which Side Are They On?

The IG's rationale for refusing to defend the SNTE is that such corporatist unions are simply organs of the state and not part of the labor movement, a notion that obliterates any distinction between the bureaucrats at the top of the unions and the workers at the base. Corporatism has long been a hallmark of the capitalist system in Mexico, as in many other semi-colonial countries. For decades, the major unions, primarily grouped within the Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM), have been integrated as component parts of the long-ruling PRI and its predecessor, the Party of the Mexican Revolution, along with associations of peasants and other "sectors." The government decided which unions were legal, installing and removing union bureaucrats at will. In return, these *charros* (cowboys) policed the unions for the state, purging and often killing dissident workers while benefiting generously from corruption.

But corporatism has been in agony for some time, with the state less interested in co-opting unions than in destroying them and whatever benefits and protections they provide, including housing and rules making it harder to fire workers. And what happens when such "police agencies," as the IG calls the pro-PRI unions, wage some struggle in response? Since the debt crisis of the 1980s, the bourgeoisie's offensive against labor has led to a diminishing role of the *charro* unions within the PRI and placed them in conflict with the state. This was true under both the PRI and more recently the PAN, which took the presidency in 2000 before losing it back to the PRI last December. One example occurred in 2006, when the PAN government ousted Napoleón Gómez Urrutia, national leader of the SNTMMSRM miners and steel workers union, in order to press a "corruption" investigation, touching off a series of powerful strikes (see "Miners, Steel Workers Strikes Shake Mexico," *WV* No. 872, 9 June 2006). And PRI-affiliated unions often engage in economic strikes.

The IG refused to defend the SNTMMSRM leadership or the union itself against the state, undoubtedly given the union's *charro* leadership and history of affiliation with the PRI. Prefiguring its line that Gordillo's arrest was a "settling of scores among the rulers," the IG claimed that Gómez Urrutia's ouster was a "settling of accounts within the regime" (even though the PRI was not then in power). While vaguely calling to "reject this frontal assault by the government," the IG's *El Internacionalista/Edición México* No. 2 omitted any call for victory to the strikes or for dropping the charges against the union leader. The question posed at the time, as the old U.S. labor anthem puts it, was which side are you on? A simple test, and one that the IG fails time and again.

The Method to Their Madness

Obfuscating its union-busting line on the SNTE, the IG resorts to some political magical realism, which, while lacking the least literary merit, does manage to create a maze of confusion. Its article on Gordillo makes the point that her arrest was "intended to crush any resistance from the side of the teachers" only to later describe the SNTE as "a labor police force that blocks the mobilization of the teachers." So why would the government weaken such a force by prosecuting Gordillo? With all the logic of Alice's looking-glass world, the IG proclaims that "the state that employed the murderer Gordillo...has no right to judge its agent" while demanding that the same state hand over its agent "so teachers can try her for murder"!

The IG's demand "Peña Nieto, hands off the teachers!" is just subterfuge, counterposing defense of people who teach to defense of their *union*. Another mystery unfolds, as the IG claims that the National Coordination of Education Workers (CNTE), the pro-PRD opposition within the SNTE, "effectively acts as an independent union" even though it "has not broken with the SNTE." Indeed, the CNTE fights explicitly to democratize the SNTE from within. One of the more militant formations in the Mexican labor movement, the CNTE is leading the current protests against the education "reform." But how can it do so as a component of what the IG dismisses as a "labor police agency"?

To show some "independence" of its own, the IG chastises the CNTE leadership for "cooperating with, and even egging on, the attorney general's 'investigation'" of Gordillo. The CNTE bureaucracy's cooperation with the state against the SNTE leader was indeed a crime against the working class. But it's sheer hypocrisy for the IG to condemn such collusion when it cannot bring itself to defend Gordillo and the union she headed against the state.

None of the IG's verbal gyrations are really supposed to make any sense. Rather, they are meant as a cover for run-of-the-mill opportunism. Tossing out all class criteria, the IG judges what constitutes an authentic union by how democratic its leadership appears to be and, in Mexico at least, by which bourgeois party it supports. Compared to the CTM bureaucrats,

EPA

April 5: Teachers in Guerrero protesting union-busting education "reform" barricaded highway, confronted by thousands of cops.

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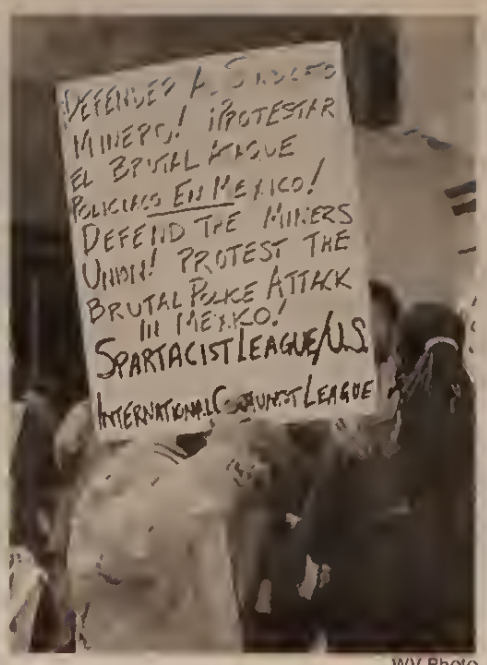

WV Photo

Left: Union copper miners protest after cop assault on striking mine workers in Cananea, Mexico, January 2008. Right: At IG-initiated demonstration the same month outside Mexican consulate, NYC, Spartacists protest attack on union.

who typically rule with an iron fist, the pro-PRD union tops are more democratic. But the non-*charro* union leaders serve the same role as lieutenants of capital within the working class, despite whatever flimsy claims they might offer to be independent of the bourgeois parties. As our comrades in the GEM wrote in an article that dealt in depth with the fight against corporatism in the Mexican labor movement:

> "The 'independent' union tops tie the workers to the Mexican bourgeoisie through other means, through nationalist ideology and illusions in 'democratic' reform of the capitalist state. Revolutionaries seek to intervene in the unions to replace the bureaucratic and nationalist leaderships with a leadership opposed to *all* bourgeois parties."
>
> —"Mexico: NAFTA's Man Targets Labor," *WV* No. 748, 15 December 2000

Elevating democracy above the class line has long been the formula used by opportunist "socialists," and not just in Mexico, to justify inviting the capitalist courts and governmental agencies to intervene to "clean up" the unions. In the early 1970s, while virtually every other left organization was cheering on the U.S. Labor Department's candidate, Arnold Miller, to take over the United Mine Workers (UMW) from Tony Boyle, a murderous thug, we were unique in opposing both sides. Miller went on to be reviled by UMW members for his subservience to the coal companies during a bitter 1977-78 strike. One can also look at the case of Jimmy Hoffa, historic leader of the Teamsters. While Hoffa was no slouch at using violence against internal critics, Marxists opposed the Justice Department's years-long vendetta against him, which was meant to cripple a union that had the power to shut down the nation's commerce.

The key principles guiding Marxists in the fight to forge a class-struggle leadership in the unions, an essential part of the effort to build a revolutionary workers party, were spelled out by Marxist leader Leon Trotsky in his 1940 essay, "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay." Trotsky wrote, "The primary slogan for this struggle is: ***complete and unconditional independence of the trade unions in relation to the capitalist state***.... The second slogan is: ***trade union democracy***. This second slogan flows directly from the first and presupposes for its realization the complete freedom of the trade unions from the imperialist or colonial state."

This is another test the IG has miserably failed. With enormous chutzpah, its article on Gordillo pontificates about the need for a union leadership that insists "on total political independence from the bourgeois state." This from an outfit whose supporters in the Brazilian city of Volta Redonda dragged the municipal workers union through the bourgeois courts in 1996-97 as they tried to hold on to the leadership of that cop-infested union. Having run an ex-cop for president, the IG's supporters turned over the union's bank statements, account books, statutes and minutes to the courts (see "IG's Brazil Cover-Up: Dirty Hands, Cynical Lies," *WV* No. 671, 11 July 1997).

Norden in His Labyrinth

The notion that corporatist unions are purely and simply appendages of the bourgeois state has nothing to do with revolutionary Marxism. In his 1940 essay, which was uncompleted due to his assassination by a Stalinist agent, Trotsky answered such moralistic nonsense with particular reference to Mexico, where the CTM was part of the ruling party under left bourgeois-nationalist Lázaro Cárdenas. At the same time, he warned that unions' ties to the thoroughly integrated into the capitalist state. By the 1950s, quantity had turned into quality." For the IG the class character of a labor organization is determined by the political face of its leadership.

This flies in the face of Trotsky's analysis. Pointing to the increasing ties of the unions to the bourgeois state in both the imperialist and the colonial and semicolonial countries, Trotsky wrote: "From the foregoing it seems, at first sight, easy to draw the conclusion that the trade unions cease to be trade unions in the imperialist epoch.... Such a position, however, would be false to the core. We cannot

Bettmann

Mexican president Lázaro Cárdenas (center) with union leaders, 1938. His bourgeois-nationalist regime used corporatism to tie labor organizations to the state.

select the arena and the conditions for our activity to suit our own likes and dislikes." Trotsky could have been writing the IG's epitaph when he warned: "Every organization, every party, every faction that permits itself an ultimatistic position in relation to trade unions, that is, in essence turns its back upon the working class merely because of displeasure with its organization, every such organization is destined to perish. And it must be said that it deserves to perish."

Among other things, the IG's position that the unions were no longer workers organizations by the 1950s prettifies the situation under Cárdenas, when the CTM was purposely brought into the government party. And if the world war and subsequent Cold War were definitive in changing the class character of the CTM in Mexico, what does that make of the unions in the U.S., where the labor bureaucracy imposed a no-strike pledge during the war and went on to drive reds out of the labor movement and collaborate with the CIA in smashing left-led unions in Europe and Latin America? Not a few leftists and petty-bourgeois radicals have written off the unions due to the treachery of their misleaders. The conclusion that Marxists draw is the necessity to fight for a new leadership to transform the unions into weapons of class struggle.

All this was something that IG leader Jan Norden used to know, when he was editor of *Workers Vanguard*. When Joaquín Hernández Galicia ("La Quina"), the notoriously brutal and corrupt head of the SRTPRM oil workers union at PEMEX, was arrested in 1989, *WV* attacked the "classless methodology" of radical-liberal intellectuals who "ask how one can possibly defend this labor kingpin." Referring to the Soviet Union, which had not yet succumbed to capitalist counterrevolution, we wrote in "Mexico Rulers Declare War on Labor" (*WV* No. 470, 3 February 1989):

> "The Trotskyists, who understand the class character of the USSR as a workers state despite its bureaucratic degeneration under Stalinist rule, and thus defend it against imperialism, likewise defend the unions against the bosses despite the sellout bureaucracy which sits atop these repositories of workers power.... Those who don't defend the Soviet Union also can't defend the oil workers union in Mexico."

Similarly, we did not write off the SNTE as a bosses' organization when the CNTE led a massive teachers strike three months later, but called to sweep away the bureaucratic misleaders through a "class-struggle fight for the independence of labor from the bourgeois state" ("Labor Showdown in Mexico," *WV* No. 476, 28 April 1989). The IG is left to explain what has changed since then.

In another case of twisted logic, the IG has insisted that the Venezuelan unions in the CTV corporatist union federation—tied from its inception to the Democratic Action party that ruled that country for decades—were "*workers* organizations" in spite of "their sellout leaderships." It is noteworthy that the CTV played a central role as an agent of Yankee imperialism in the U.S.-orchestrated coup attempt against the Hugo Chávez regime in 2002.

To save our readers from more of their tortured reasoning, we will cut to the chase. In 1996, Norden & Co. departed the Trotskyist ICL, allowing them full rein to indulge their opportunist appetites. In Mexico today, the IG accommodates the rulers' attacks on PRI-affiliated unions in order to appeal to nationalist-populist forces in and around the PRD. For revolutionary Marxists, swimming against the nationalist stream is part of the task of building a Leninist workers party, independent of and opposed to all the bourgeois parties—PRI, PAN, PRD and Morena. As Trotsky wrote in concluding his 1940 essay: "The independence of the trade unions in the class sense, in their relations to the bourgeois state, can, in the present conditions, be assured only by a completely revolutionary leadership, that is, the leadership of the Fourth International." ■

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France

Fake Trotskyists Support Firing of Veiled Women

The following article is translated from Le Bolchévik *No. 204 (June 2013), newspaper of aur comrades of the Ligue Trotskyste de France.*

LE BOLCHEVIK

MAY 3—In March, the Final Court of Appeals reversed a decision that had allowed the Baby Loup day-care center to fire an employee for wearing an Islamic headscarf. Seizing on this ruling, [Socialist Party] president François Hollande announced that he wanted a new law that would extend to the private sector the restrictions on wearing the headscarf now in force in the public schools. He proclaimed, "Whenever there is contact with children, in what we call public care for toddlers, there should be parity with what exists in the [public] schools."

The government and local administrations are already closing maternity hospitals, cutting back the family allowance, preventing children whose parents are unemployed from eating in school cafeterias, etc. But babies and toddlers can sleep peacefully because Hollande and his education minister Vincent Peillon will protect them from nannies in headscarves. Hollande & Co. hope their new crusade, waged in the name of the sacrosanct principle of "secularism" and the "values of the Republic," will bring them a little relief by deflecting people's attention away from soaring unemployment and the new austerity programs coming on top of the existing ones.

Supporting Hollande over the Baby Loup affair are many of the same people who yesterday were howling in support of [former president Nicolas] Sarkozy's anti-Muslim provocations: Alain Finkielkraut, Philippe Val, Jeannette Bougrab, Elisabeth Badinter, etc. But behind them stand the Left Party and Lutte Ouvrière (LO), serving as a grotesque left cover for this latest racist attack by the French state. And they join the fray in the name of combating women's oppression. Thus, LO headlined its article on the Baby Loup court decision "The Final Appeals Court and the Baby Loup Childcare Center: An Attack on Women's Rights" (*Lutte Ouvrière*, 29 March).

It is obvious that a new law prohibiting the headscarf in the private sector will only reinforce the isolation of Muslim women in their homes as well as their economic woes. Their families will pay the price. This campaign is in the service of the racist lie that the real problem in society is not the capitalist system but supposedly women in headscarves, and Muslims and minorities in general. The ayatollahs of secularism intend to broaden their offensive. In the name of "religious neutrality," they are now trying to ban the headscarf for childcare providers working out of their own homes. A similar law was adopted by the Senate a year ago. It was dropped from the Assembly's legislative agenda but has now resurfaced, promoted by Roger-Gérard Schwartzenberg, honorary president of the [bourgeois] Left Radicals and part of the government majority.

These home-based childcare providers, often Muslims, provide a service that allows many thousands of other women to leave home to work given the shortage of day-care centers in France. The Baby Loup center offers 24-hour childcare seven days a week—which is very rare—in one of the working-class suburbs around Paris. But the great defenders of secularism and women's rights are not only ready to see it closed rather than employ a woman in a headscarf, they are equally ready to sentence countless other women to unemployment if their home-based childcare law is passed. ***We say: No ta racist exclusions and laws against the veil! Down with the government's anti-Muslim offensive!***

"Secularism": Cover for Anti-Muslim Prejudice

This so-called secularism, which is a cover for anti-Muslim prejudices, has nothing to do with the principle of secularism established by the French Revolution of 1789. As we explained in our article "Women and Immigration in France" [*Spartacist* (English-language edition) No. 57, Winter 2002-2003]:

> "The French state *deformed* the goals and values of the French Revolution with this attack on these Muslim girls. Under the *ancien régime* of the French king, France was known as 'the eldest daughter of the Church.' The principle of secularism in the French Revolution came from the need to protect the freedom to express ideas and to free society from the hands of the Catholic church. That this principle is used today by a Catholic majority to oppress a Muslim minority in French society is a cruel irony of history. It underscores the degree to which the French bourgeoisie in the epoch of capitalist decay has degenerated from the class that led the 1789 Revolution, a historic watershed in the struggle for human emancipation."

The Ligue Trotskyste de France has always opposed the headscarf and the veil, which represent a reactionary social program of keeping women within the confines of the family, in the home and in a position of servitude. Likewise, we oppose the trappings of all religions, all of which promote the family, which is the bedrock of women's oppression. In France, a 1905 law went some way toward the separation of church and state, but Catholicism remains powerful and is used by the ruling class to reinforce social conservatism and sanctify capitalist class rule. This has been repeatedly demonstrated in the past six months as priests and their well-heeled flocks have taken the streets to spew their reactionary venom, praying and marching in opposition to new democratic rights for gays and in support of their model of "one man on one woman for life."

MAXPPP

Fatima Afif, 2010.

Islam in France will never be anything but a religion of the ghetto, i.e., a religion of the oppressed who often have lost hope of fighting the racist segregation and poverty they endure under French capitalism. They turn to religion not only as a refuge but also as an act of defiance of the French state that excludes them. This is why Marx called religion "the heart of a heartless world." The mosques are overflowing in Chanteloup-les-Vignes where the Baby Loup day-care center is located and in many *banlieues* [minority and working-class neighborhoods on the outskirts of big cities] across the country where unemployment is at least twice the national average (and even higher for youth).

Julien Jaulin

May 6: Strike at Charles de Gaulle Airport by workers providing services to the disabled.

Evidently, Fatima Afif, the worker at the center of the Baby Loup affair, wanted to wear the headscarf after returning to the facility in December 2008 from a five-year family leave. Prior to this leave, which began in May 2003, she had no problem wearing her headscarf at work. But during her absence, in the summer of 2003, new regulations were instituted at her workplace to impose "philosophical, political and religious neutrality." During her five-year leave, racist exclusions served to push women like Afif deeper into religious obscurantism.

For a Multiethnic Revolutionary Workers Party!

The use of secularism as a cover for anti-Islamic prejudice escalated in the early 1990s and reached a high point in 2004 with then-president Chirac's law banning the headscarf in schools. The backdrop to this rise in reaction was capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and across East Europe in 1990-92—a huge defeat for the world's working class and oppressed, which was hailed by virtually the entire "left." The capitalist class, which appropriates the wealth produced by the workers, has needed a scapegoat to derail the class struggles that continue to break out.

The Communist Party and the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR—which finally dropped the "communism" in its name to become the "New Anti-Capitalist Party") believed the bourgeoisie's lies about the so-called "death of communism" and the end of the *grand soir* [revolutionary aspirations]. But the bourgeoisie knew they had to continue to devise schemes to divide and weaken the working class—hence the "Green [Islamic] Peril." In 1991, at the onset of the first Gulf War, ["Socialist" president François] Mitterrand deployed "Vigipirate" [a campaign of cop terror in minority communities] for the first time. It was reminiscent of the anti-Muslim offensive in Paris during the Algerian War and laid the groundwork for the "war on terror" against Islam. It also provided the basis for a significant strengthening of the state's repressive arsenal against any perceived opponent of capitalist rule and ultimately the working class. ***Down with Vigipirate! For workers mobilizations against racist state terror!***

The isolation and hopelessness of the oppressed in this society today are the bitter fruit of the left's betrayals. Socialist rulers Mitterrand, Lionel Jospin and now Hollande have all portrayed Muslims as the new "enemy within" and have increased deportations and attacks on undocumented immigrants. They have also driven down the living standards of the poorest layers in society. The economic crisis has only made things worse, as factories that used to employ the fathers and grandfathers of today's minority youth have closed down. The planned closure of the PSA auto plant in Aulnay, the axing of 800 temporary jobs at Sochaux and the decision to eliminate 1,200 jobs at Phone House are just the tip of the iceberg of constantly rising youth unemployment.

The parents and grandparents of today's minority youth contributed to creating France's wealth in the period following World War II. But their descendants are largely treated as a surplus population, useful at best for an occasional short-term job but more often destined for the local unemployment office or prison.

At the same time, until capitalism is overthrown, the bourgeoisie will need a proletariat to exploit and extract surplus value from in order to generate profits

and capital. While the capitalists seek to transfer more and more manufacturing overseas, where even more profit can be squeezed out of foreign workers, an industrial infrastructure remains and will remain in this country. From Charles de Gaulle Airport, to auto plants, public transport, construction, etc., not to mention janitors and staff in nursing homes, it is clear that minority workers make up a disproportionate percentage of the workforce. Their central role in production gives them the social power that is essential to fight against capitalist exploitation. This is also why the bourgeoisie sees them as a special threat.

The struggles to save individual plants or defend local working conditions, which are now often isolated and end in defeat, must be taken to a higher level. For this, the working class needs a revolutionary leadership, a tribune of the people. Such a leadership would fight for jobs for all, especially for youth of immigrant background. It would combat the daily racist terror in the minority neighborhoods and wage a fight for women's rights. It would expose how the poison of racism, a form of "false consciousness," is used to divide the working class. It would seek to win the working class to defend ghetto youth and veiled women against repression. If workers combat the rulers' divisive

Marnette/Le Parisien

Sirine, expelled from school in Val-de-Marne in early April.

maneuvers, they will wield their social power with greater unity and become stronger against the bosses.

A revolutionary party would also combat the lies peddled by the left that capitalism can be made to be more humane, gentle and inclusive. Only workers overthrowing their exploiters through socialist revolution can open the way for a new society based on a centralized planned economy. The fight will have to be extended internationally, but it will immediately be possible to start tackling the scourges of capitalism—unemployment, scarcity and social oppression—along with the prejudice and reaction they breed. We are dedicated to building such a leadership, and our model is the experience of the Bolshevik Party and the Russian Revolution of October 1917.

Le Bolchévik

Paris, 2004: LTF banner at protest against ban on headscarf reads, "No to the Racist Law Against Youth Wearing the Headscarf! Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants! Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!"

Expelling Veiled Girls from School

In 2003, giant public-sector strikes exploded against the Fillon reform, which was an attack on pensions. One of the clearest examples of how the bourgeoisie wields "secularism" to divide the workers and weaken their struggles occurred in this context. Teachers formed one of the most militant sectors of these strikes. Although the protests ended in June with a sellout by the union bureaucrats, many teachers threatened to resume their strike action at the start of the fall term. It was at the onset of the strike movement to defend pensions that the Socialist Jack Lang, a former education minister, introduced a bill in parliament seeking to outlaw the headscarf in schools. Fellow Socialist Laurent Fabius then picked up the baton. At the height of the strike movement in late May, he publicly demanded such a law, joining the leaders of the [governing conservative] UMP, which was increasingly calling for such legislation.

When schools reopened, Lutte Ouvrière and leading LCR members such as Pierre-François Grond (now with the Anti-Capitalist Left inside the Left Front) acted as foot soldiers for secularism, opening up a new front rather than resuming the fight over pensions. This time they marched in step with [labor minister François] Fillon and Chirac, to exclude from their schools young women wearing the headscarf. Some LO members and Grond played a key role in the expulsion of Alma and Lila Levy from their high school in Aubervilliers. LO and Grond served to spearhead the 2004 headscarf law, which brought a rare moment of national unity for then-president Chirac. Building on it, he launched new attacks on workers, notably the privatization of EDF-GDF [electric and gas companies] in June 2004.

Before the new school year in August 2003, LO was lamenting that Chirac would not go all the way and ban the headscarf at schools. They wrote: "When they want to bury a problem they create a commission. And what Chirac is proposing to set up certainly seems to come out of that tradition" (*Lutte Ouvrière*, 8 August 2003). But LO would not be disappointed by the commission presided over by Bernard Stasi. In December 2003, it recommended a ban on the headscarf in schools. Barely a few weeks later, the law was adopted with 93 percent of the legislators across all parties in favor. In a recent article on the Baby Loup affair, *Le Monde Diplomatique*'s Alain Gresh noted regarding the Stasi commission (blog.mondediplo.net):

> "Going back to the 2003-04 debate is important, because the commission, to justify its choices, based itself on 'examples' and 'cases' supposedly proving that the school system faced an imminent threat. Now the same pretext is being used *with the Baby Loup affair*, to justify a new law the only result of which will be, again, to stigmatize Muslims as suspect a priori."

Only on the last day of hearings did the commission agree to even hear from women wearing the headscarf. It previously had no qualms, however, about interviewing the [fascist] National Front or about hearing from carefully selected teachers and school principals who all recounted more or less the same horror story that the so-called jewel of the Republic—its secular public school system—was under siege by Islamic fanatics. The Ligue Trotskyste de France participated in the 14 February 2004 demonstration called to protest this law with a banner reading: "No to the Racist Law Against Youth Wearing the Headscarf! Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants! Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!"

LO, however, welcomed Chirac's law: "If in the end there is a law, so much the better. Because for all these girls who are fighting to be able to dress, work and live as they want, which means not to wear the veil, this can be a point of support" (*Lutte Ouvrière*, 6 February 2004). Since the law was passed in 2004, racial divisions and tensions have only increased. At least a dozen Muslim private schools now exist, including in Aubervilliers, where Lutte Ouvrière had Alma and Lila Levy expelled. And while it is difficult to establish just how many expulsions have taken place over this nine-year period, it is undeniable that young girls continue to be driven out of public school and into private religious schools.

The most recent example is 15-year-old Sirine, who was expelled from her school in Val-de-Marne in early April after being barred from attending classes for four months because her headband was too wide and her skirt too long for her inquisitors. The local court in Melun ruled in mid March that her school had to reinstate her, but the school district administration appealed and she was expelled for good shortly thereafter. Sirine will now attend a private school, no doubt one that is religious and probably Muslim. How her expulsion combats women's oppression is for LO and their fellow devotees of secularism to explain. [Sirine is now attending another public school.]

Banning Layoffs... Except for Veiled Women!

In 2003-04, Lutte Ouvrière manned the front lines in the effort to get a law passed expelling veiled young women from school. Today in the wake of the Baby Loup affair, they once again present themselves as the guarantors of a new law to be recommended by Hollande's *Observatoire de la laïcité* [government body ensuring enforcement of secularism in the public sector]. An article in *Lutte Ouvrière* (29 March) said about the court decision in favor of Fatima Afif: "This decision rightly provoked a wave of protests, because it gives ammunition to obscurantists of all stripes, and many people are calling for a revision of the existing laws, calling for a broadening of the prohibition of obvious displays of religious practice, in the name of secularism." Given its protest of the decision, one can only suppose that LO counts itself among the "many" demanding new legislation. And this came in the context of rising racist attacks, of which women are often the main victims. Of the reported attacks against Muslims compiled by the Collective Against Islamophobia in France, 94 percent were women.

On May 18, the Moms Are All Equal Collective is calling for another demonstration to protest any future law banning veiled women from working in the private sector. They are also demanding the abrogation of the 2012 Chatel Circular (passed under Sarkozy), which recommends that schools "prevent" mothers wearing the headscarf from accompanying their kids on school outings, all in the name of "secularism and neutrality in the public sphere." Of course, the Socialist Party minister of cops and "relations with religions," Manuel Valls, declared that he wants to see the Chatel Circular upheld. Last year at the time of the presidential elections, Moms Are All Equal wrote to all candidates about the impact of the 2004 law and asked where they stood on the Chatel Circular, the ban on veiled women working in the public sector, etc. Nathalie Arthaud, a leader of LO and their presidential candidate at the time, replied:

> "Far from excluding young girls, the law makes it possible for everyone to attend school, and, for those who do not want

continued on page 8

Reuters

Paris, May 2011: Tunisian migrants arrested by French police for squatting.

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France...

(continued from page 7)

> to wear the veil, to maintain this place of liberty....
> "It is one thing that women want to wear [the headscarf], but it is something else when this discriminatory fact is sanctioned by society....
> "We do not criticize your approach in the name of secularism or in the name of fighting against religion, we do so in the name of women's struggle for their emancipation. This will not be achieved through sanctioning the wearing of the veil in the public sphere, but on the contrary by allowing those who do not want to wear it, to not do so....
> "Thus our solidarity goes above all to the women and girls who have the courage to resist these pressures, to those who want to lead their lives freely with uncovered faces and who see their freedom being restricted."

Arthaud refuses to "sanction" the wearing of the headscarf in the public sphere and opposes veiled mothers accompanying their children. In light of this and of their reaction to the Baby Loup decision, it seems that Lutte Ouvrière's rallying call "Against unemployment, ban layoffs" has its limits. Their "solidarity" doesn't extend to women wearing the headscarf, many of whom are among the poorest and most oppressed women in French society. As if preventing veiled girls from attending school or preventing women from going to work—driving them back into the home—was a way to fight women's oppression! Behind such discrimination and exclusion is the grousing of Valls & Co. that these women don't want to assimilate into their precious Republic.

For LO to call the public school system a "place of liberty" shows their reformism on this question. It also is a reflection of the fact that they have a strong base among teachers. Schools are in fact key institutions for maintaining capitalist rule—teaching children of the ruling class how to rule and children of the oppressed that they have to accept subjugation to bourgeois authority or get kicked out. Nathalie Arthaud teaches in Aubervilliers, a heavily immigrant city where many mothers wear the headscarf. Arthaud is not blind to reality but she willfully deceives herself (and more importantly, her supporters) with her "secularist" bias.

LO's refusal to understand special oppression—and to understand that the most oppressed choose to wear the headscarf—makes them see veiled women as militant ideologues trying to islamicize France. Some of these women are immigrants, who are continuing the oppressive religious practices of their countries of origin where Islam is the state religion. Others choose to wear the headscarf, consciously or not, in defiance of the racist exclusion they experience under French capitalism and to find some consolation for their ordeal and stigmatization. In neither case can LO's parroting of the racist campaign against "green fascism" begin to address either the material oppression of these women or their backward religious views; it can only reinforce them.

Women's oppression is rooted in class society. The historical function of the family under capitalism is to transmit private property to "legitimate" heirs through inheritance (which requires monogamy on the part of the wife) as well as to instill respect for authority and obedience to the code of bourgeois morality. That is why we maintain that ultimately women's liberation can be won only through socialist revolution. A workers state would strive to provide round-the-clock childcare, communal cafeterias and kitchens, laundries and free, quality health care, all of which would in time replace the social functions of the family and allow women to fully participate in social life.

For New October Revolutions!

We draw our inspiration from the Bolshevik Party's work for women's liberation. In a very different context from imperialist and "secular" France, the atheist Bolshevik women leaders, under the direction of the Zhenotdel (Department of Working Women and Peasant Women) donned the veil themselves to go among the terribly oppressed women of Soviet Central Asia in order to educate and liberate them. It was extremely dangerous work and many Bolshevik women organizers were murdered. As we wrote in *Spartacist*:

> "The creation of a planned, collectivized economy permitted the workers state to invest the surplus from the more advanced west in the more backward east and thereby begin to lay the basis for the equality of peoples in the Soviet Union. This is clearly seen when one looks at the vital statistics in the republics of the former Soviet Union on one side of the border and compares them with Afghanistan on the other side of the border. On the Soviet side, women were no longer imprisoned in the veil, they were literate; on the Afghan side of the border they were largely illiterate and the statistics for infant mortality and life expectancy were dramatically different on the two sides of the frontier."

After the Soviet Red Army intervened in Afghanistan in 1979 at the request of its government, women could get an education. They became teachers, nurses, soldiers. But as part of the imperialist drive to restore capitalism in the Soviet Union, the U.S. armed the Islamic reactionaries who imprisoned women in the *burqa* [head-to-toe veil] and threw acid in the face of those teaching girls how to read and write. (Meanwhile, Doctors Without Borders and other French "humanitarian" organizations linked up with the French secret services to aid the Muslim "resistance.") In Afghanistan, the veil was a matter of life and death for women. Yet Lutte Ouvrière condemned the Soviet intervention (a position they continue to uphold today), comparing the Red Army's progressive act with the rape of Vietnam by the French and later the American imperialists. So much for these self-professed champions of women's rights.

We think another world is possible—but here, not in heaven, and not while the capitalist system remains intact. Unlike our reformist opponents, we state the truth. However distant this perspective may appear today, only through a proletarian socialist revolution can we begin to build a society free of hunger, war and racism; a world where men and women will no longer need to take refuge in religious fantasies to escape the harsh reality of this capitalist society of oppression and misery. To that end, we fight to uphold a revolutionary program and to build an international party committed to bringing the working class to power. ■

CPSU CC Archive

1926 gathering of Zhenotdel activists in Dagestan in the Caucasus.

Zionists...

(continued from page 2)

Levant. Brenner cited Weizmann's report to the World Zionist Congress in August 1937: "The old ones will pass; they will bear their fate, or they will not. They were dust, economic and moral dust, in a cruel world."

Wise and the AJC certainly did not want that "economic and moral dust" in America either. In a letter to FDR dated 2 December 1942, Wise bragged about suppressing news of Hitler's extermination plans, fearing that it might garner support for increased Jewish immigration to the U.S.: "I have had cables and underground advices for some months, telling of these things. I succeed, together with the heads of other Jewish organisations, in keeping them out of the press." When Congress considered establishing a rescue commission in 1943—with the Nazi machine of industrial genocide in full swing—Wise personally rushed to Washington to kill the bill because it did not mention Palestine. He was also loath to see waves of Jewish immigrants arrive on America's shores lest they provoke an anti-Semitic outpouring and spoil things for well-established bourgeois and petty-bourgeois Jews.

But the Zionists' single greatest crime during World War II was their collaboration with Adolf Eichmann, the Nazi chief of transport responsible for executing the "Final Solution of the Jewish Question" in occupied Hungary. In early 1944, Eichmann made a private deal with Reszö Kasztner, a Hungarian Zionist politician and, grotesquely, the head of the Aid and Rescue Committee, to spare 1,685 Jews for a ransom of $1,000 a head. In return, Kasztner would ensure that the rest of the Jews would accept deportation without resistance. In the record span of less than two months, over 437,000 Jews were sent to Auschwitz, the overwhelming majority of whom were murdered upon their arrival. Around the same time, Eichmann allowed Joel Brand, another prominent member of the Aid and Rescue Committee, to leave Occupied Europe with a proposal from the Nazis: They would exchange one million Jews for 10,000 trucks from the U.S. and Britain to be used on the Eastern front against the Soviet Union. The Allies rejected the deal. Lord Moyne, the highest British official in the Near East, when informed by Brand of the proposal, asked: "What can I do with this million Jews? Where can I put them?" (T. Zane Reeves, *Shoes Along the Danube* [2011]). Seven months later, Lord Moyne was gunned down by the right-wing Zionist terrorists of the Stern Gang.

The 255,000 Hungarian Jews who survived the Holocaust did so thanks to the victorious Red Army, which put an end to the Nazi reign of terror and liberated the survivors of the East European death camps. As a workers state, the Soviet Union was compelled to save the Jews despite its bureaucratic degeneration under Stalin, who was himself an anti-Semite.

A penetrating analysis of the Jewish question and the rise of Zionism was provided by the Belgian Jewish Trotskyist Abram Leon. Writing under German occupation before his murder by the Nazis at Auschwitz at the age of 26, Leon characterized the Jews as a "people-class" who, as moneylenders and merchants, had provided the yeast for the development of capitalism out of feudalism. In 20th-century Europe, Jewish intellectuals and workers played a disproportionate role in the socialist movement. Such people were not attracted to the Zionist project since they looked forward to putting an end to anti-Semitism and all racism through the establishment of a socialist society.

Before Hitler's ascension to power, the common answer of European socialists, even of the reformist Second International that included the Zionist "socialists," was assimilation. Zionism was an entirely marginal political movement, and Jewish colonization of Palestine was modest, with many individual Jews leaving after a short stay there. It would take the victory of Hitlerite fascism in Germany, with the "democratic" imperialists turning a blind eye to the fate of European Jewry, to transform Zionism into a mass movement.

The time to have saved East European Jewry was in advance of the inter-imperialist carnage, with the SWP's campaign to open U.S. borders representing a last-ditch effort to do so. The war brought Jewish immigration to Palestine to a virtual standstill. After its conclusion, the large number of Jews migrating to that country, in the process displacing the Palestinian people, consisted in their vast majority of desperate individuals with no other place to go.

In his book *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation* (published posthumously in 1946), Leon wrote:

> "The conditions of the decline of capitalism which have posed so sharply the Jewish question make its solution equally impossible along the Zionist road. And there is nothing astonishing in that. An evil cannot be suppressed without destroying its causes. But Zionism wishes to resolve the Jewish question without destroying capitalism, which is the principal source of the suffering of the Jews....
> "With the disappearance of capitalism, the national problem will lose all its acuteness. If it is premature to speak of a worldwide assimilation of peoples, it is nonetheless clear that a planned economy on a global scale will bring all the peoples of the world much closer to each other."

Like his Trotskyist comrades in the Warsaw Ghetto, who emblazoned across their publication the slogan "Workers of the World Unite!", Leon embodied the revolutionary internationalist program that alone can end the barbarism of future holocausts unleashed by the death agony of capitalism. ■

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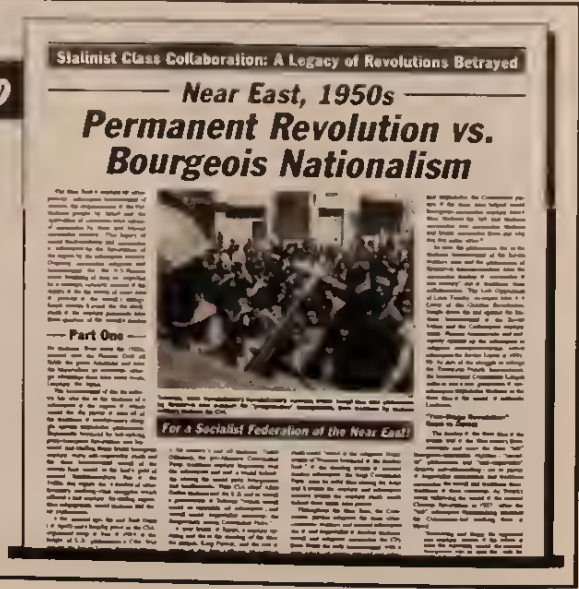

Down With "Age of Consent" Laws!

Drop the Charges Against Gay Florida Teen!

Kaitlyn Hunt, a high school senior in Sebastian, Florida, faces up to 15 years in jail and lifetime branding as a "sex offender," for the "crime" of being in a same-sex relationship with a freshman schoolmate. The two were dating when Hunt was 18 and her girlfriend was 14. Her girlfriend's parents, reportedly outraged that their daughter was "made" a lesbian, conspired with the police to record a conversation between the two youth. The next day, on February 16, Hunt was arrested for "lewd and lascivious battery of a child 12 to 16 years of age." Before the state intervened, Hunt had already been kicked off the school basketball team for her relationship. She has since been expelled from school. On May 24, Hunt rejected a plea deal that included a charge of child abuse, two years of house arrest and one year of probation.

Kaitlyn Hunt and her father, Steve.

Officials predictably deny the obvious: Hunt was targeted because she is in a gay relationship. State Attorney Bruce Colton declared: "You're talking the difference between a senior in high school and a freshman in high school. That's what the law is designed to protect." Actually, the only protection provided is to the moral and religious puritanism pervading American society. As anyone who's seen a movie, watched a television show or gone to high school knows, teens do have sex.

The sex police, though, want to stop consenting youth from acting on sexual desires, romantic feelings and the impulse to experiment. Even teenagers who have no physical contact but simply engage in "online sex" are subject to prosecution, and meddling parents can use anti-sex laws to break up relationships. The regimentation of youth—including by dictating who they can screw and how they should live—is a central purpose of the institution of the family, a mainstay of the capitalist order and source of women's oppression.

We in the Spartacus Youth Clubs oppose all laws governing "crimes without victims," e.g., consensual sex, gambling, drug use. Sexual relations should be guided by effective consent and nothing else. As long as those taking part mutually agree, nobody—least of all the state—has the right to tell them they can't do it. We also oppose "sex offender" registries, a form of life sentence in themselves. Those on them face systematic discrimination and are set up for state repression and vigilante violence.

In this racist society, reactionary "age of consent" laws provide yet another means to criminalize black youth. In 2005, Genarlow Wilson was sentenced to ten years in prison in Georgia for engaging in consensual oral sex with a younger schoolmate. Following massive public outcry, he was finally released after serving two years. Professional football player Marcus Dixon was thrown into prison in 2003, when he was 18 years old, for having consensual sex with a white girl just shy of 16. The Georgia Supreme Court ordered his release a year later.

Hunt has won a lot of supporters since her arrest. But the Vero Beach chapter of the Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays is not among them. Its president released a statement that grotesquely opined: "The problem is that there is a law, and it appears the law was broken." The rulers of this bigoted country have always had it in for sexual "deviants." It was not so long ago that anti-sodomy laws were on the books. In Alabama, sex education teachers are still required by law to instruct students that homosexuality is a crime and "not a lifestyle acceptable to the general public."

Hunt did nothing wrong! We demand: Drop the charges now! The Hunt family's online petition at change.org has garnered nearly 300,000 signatures. Letters of protest can be written directly to State Attorney Bruce Colton and Assistant State Attorney Brian Workman, State Attorney's Office 19th Judicial Circuit, 411 South 2nd Street, Fort Pierce, Florida 34950. The Hunt family is raising money to defray legal costs at: gofundme.com/2yz5ts. ■

Birth Control...

(continued from page 12)

calculated maneuver by the White House to head off protest against its appeal of the court order issued just weeks earlier. The new FDA guidelines only remove the prescription requirement for 15- and 16-year-olds who want to buy Plan B One-Step. But this allowance does not apply to other emergency contraception on the market, thus preserving preferential market position for the Teva product. The morning-after pill can still only be bought from a registered pharmacy, and ID is required for everyone who wants to buy it. But very few teenagers have government-issued ID, not to mention the cool $50 the price-gouging drug company charges for the little 1.5 mg tablet.

The U.S. teen pregnancy rate is one of the highest in the developed world, more than twice as high as the rates in Canada and Sweden. Young black and Latina women suffer the highest rates, reflecting their limited access to health care in this deeply racist, class-divided society. Together with undocumented immigrants, they are the least likely to have photo ID. The effectiveness of the morning-after pill declines swiftly—it needs to be taken as soon as possible after sex. Fast, no-hassle access is key. All the delays caused by overcoming the prescription and ID requirements, not to mention finding the money to pay for it and an open pharmacy willing to sell it, combine to massively reduce the effectiveness of the drug.

The attacks on women's rights and on the limited abortion services still available have escalated during the years of the Obama presidency. Already in 2008, 87 percent of all counties in the U.S. had no abortion providers. In recent years Republicans in state legislatures have spearheaded the attacks, but the Democrats have their share of responsibility. Obama has consistently renewed the Hyde Amendment, signed into law by fellow Democrat Jimmy Carter, which eliminated federal funding of abortions. Obama's signature first-term act on health care, the Affordable Care Act, was renegotiated to appease reactionary bishops at the expense of women workers in Catholic institutions who have to go elsewhere for insurance coverage for contraception. The act specifies that funds will not be used for abortion services, and it allocates $250 million for ludicrous "abstinence only" miseducation.

Obama concluded his April 26 speech to Planned Parenthood by saying, "As long as we've got to fight to protect a woman's right to make her own choices about her own health, I want you to know that you've also got a President who's going to be right there with you fighting every step of the way." Well, Obama's fighting record is crystal clear—against progress, reason, science and women's rights. The fact that Planned Parenthood rolls out the red carpet for Obama—who upholds the same policies as Bush on teen birth control—shows how the Democrats are more effective than the Republicans at greasing the skids for attacks. Witness the lack of social protests against Obama's war crimes abroad, the layoffs and speedups demanded by the capitalists at home, and the ongoing reality of racist oppression.

In our article, "White House Obstructs Morning-After Pill for Teens" (*WV* No. 993, 6 January 2012), we said:

> "The Obama administration's ruling on the morning-after pill shows that the religion-drenched, cruel priorities of bourgeois electoral politics trump the needs of some of the most vulnerable members of society. Sexual repression is all about social control. The capitalist class seeks to buttress the family—the main social institution oppressing women—which along with organized religion and the state forms a triad that props up the exploitation of labor."

As representatives of the capitalist class, the Democratic politicians are just as much enemies of the workers and oppressed as the Republicans are. Our perspective is to forge a revolutionary workers party as a tribune of the people. Only the working class, by taking power in its own name, can build a society in which women and youth are not second-class citizens but play a full, productive role. A future socialist society will apply the highest scientific technique in the service of people's health and well-being. ■

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Syria...

(continued from page 1)

national revolts and popular uprisings across the region.

In Iraq, the British imperialists forcibly cobbled together a single state consisting of different peoples, including Sunni and Shi'ite Arabs as well as Kurds and Turkmens. In furthering their policy of divide and rule, the imperialists promoted ethnic or religious minorities like the Syrian Alawites to lord it over the predominantly Sunni Syria.

U.S. imperialism's invasions of Iraq in 1991 and 2003, aimed at perpetuating and extending its world domination, manipulated and reinforced those divisions by playing Shi'ite, Sunni and Kurdish forces off against each other. Similarly, Washington's drive to effect "regime change" in Syria, a pivotal country in the oil-rich Near East, is inflaming communal tensions. Meanwhile, Russia has been a major backer of Syria, providing the Assad regime with sophisticated missile defense technology and presenting an obstacle to Washington's ambitions.

For its part, Turkey—NATO's bulwark in the Near East and a key sponsor of the Sunni anti-Assad opposition—spotted the Syrian conflict as an opening to extend its own influence in the lands of the former Ottoman Empire. A newspaper expressing the views of the "moderate" Turkish fundamentalist regime of Recep Tayyip Erdogan proclaimed at the end of last year that "the World War I borders" are melting away, and Erdogan's foreign minister has asserted that the end of the Sykes-Picot period is near.

WV Map

Both sides in the communally-based Syrian civil war are deeply reactionary enemies of the working class. But in the event that the U.S. and/or European imperialists go beyond their present support to the anti-Assad forces and launch a military attack on Syria, working people in this country and internationally must stand with Syria against the imperialist forces. As Marxists, we would maintain proletarian political opposition to Assad's bloodsoaked rule. Our aim is to win workers to the understanding that predatory imperialism is the main force for reaction in the world and that the imperialists and their regional lackeys must be overthrown through international socialist revolution.

AP

Marines in Falluja, November 2004. U.S. imperialists devastated city during occupation of Iraq.

Imperialist Depredations and the Rise of Islamic Fundamentalism

There was nothing inevitable about the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and intercommunal conflict in the Near East, although these have tended to dominate political life in that region for at least a generation. At bottom, the turn to Islamism is a product of despair, conditioned by the political bankruptcy of the large Stalinist Communist parties that existed in many Arab countries in the 1940s and '50s. Despite the revolutionary aspirations of their ranks and supporters, the Communist parties of the Near East helped install bourgeois-nationalist regimes, which then crushed the left and workers movement and persecuted national and ethnic minorities.

As we underlined in "Near East, 1950s: Permanent Revolution vs. Bourgeois Nationalism" (*WV* Nos. 740 and 741, 25 August and 8 September 2000), Communist parties in that period attracted the most class-conscious workers and radical intellectuals throughout the Near East. They were virtually the only political organizations with a base that cut across the myriad national, ethnic and religious lines in the region: Jews played a major role in the Egyptian Communist movement, as did Kurds in the Iraqi.

The Communist militants were inspired by the example of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. The Soviet Union, albeit degenerated under Stalinist rule, remained a workers state embodying historic gains of the October Revolution of 1917, centrally the planned economy and collectivized property. As a result of the Bolshevik Revolution, the Muslim regions of the former tsarist empire—Central Asia and Azerbaijan in the Transcaucasus—had advanced from conditions even more socially and economically backward than the Near East today to modern societies in which women were no longer enslaved by the veil and education and medical care were available to all.

However, revolutionary upheavals in the Near East, exemplified by the Iraqi revolution of 1958-59, did not result in new October Revolutions. Instead, these opportunities were sacrificed on the altar of the Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy's futile and treacherous pursuit of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism. The Iraqi CP in 1958 had the overwhelming support of the multinational Iraqi working class and clearly could have taken power. Yet the Moscow Stalinists sold out the revolution in the interests of placating the U.S. And the Iraqi CP went along, putting the brakes on the movement. The CP threw its support behind the government headed by the bourgeois-nationalist officer Brigadier Qassim, who then turned on the Communists. In 1963, the reactionary, nationalist Ba'ath party, which included Saddam Hussein in its ranks, came to power and carried out a bloodbath of thousands of leftist workers using lists supplied by the CIA.

Today, Iraq, once one of the more advanced countries in the Near East and a regional cultural center, lies in ruins. Two U.S.-led wars and over a decade of UN sanctions, which killed over one and a half million people, devastated Iraq's economy and infrastructure. This devastation and the widespread desperation felt by the population have helped nourish the growth of Islamic fundamentalism in that country.

The legacy of Stalinist betrayals in the Near East, combined with the bankruptcy of bourgeois nationalism and the desperate misery of the masses, helped create the vacuum that would eventually open the floodgates to the ascendancy of political Islam as a predominant force in the region. Political Islam, in turn, has inflamed the already pervasive communalism that has long plagued the region. Two key events in the rise of political Islam were the 1979 "Islamic Revolution" in Iran and the war in Afghanistan waged by reactionary, U.S.-backed Islamic fundamentalists against Soviet military forces that moved into that country in December 1979.

In Iran, where mass protests erupted against the dictatorial regime of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi in 1978-79, the pro-Soviet Tudeh Party had a mass base among the working class, notably the powerful and strategic oil workers, while the more left-wing guerrillaist Fedayeen attracted tens of thousands of youth to its banners. Yet these groups chained the combative working class to the reactionary Shi'ite mullahs led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Uniquely on the left internationally, we championed the proletariat's class interests against the forces of Islamic reaction. Our battle cry was: "Down With the Shah! Don't Bow to Khomeini! For Workers Revolution in Iran!"

Upon coming to power, the Khomeini regime embarked upon the mass slaughter of leftists, trade unionists and unveiled women as well as Kurds and other national minorities. As we noted in our "Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program" (adopted in 1998): "The 1979 'Iranian Revolution' opened up a period of ascendant political Islam in the historically Muslim world, a development which contributed to and was powerfully reinforced by the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union."

In Afghanistan, reactionary Sunni *mujahedin* (holy warriors)—among them, Osama bin Laden—were armed, funded and trained by the U.S., Pakistan and Saudi Arabia to kill Soviet soldiers. The Red Army had entered the country at the request of the modernizing nationalist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) regime, in order to defend the USSR's southern flank and to prop up the besieged government. The PDPA's introduction of minimal social reforms—especially those benefiting women, such as the lowering of the bride price—had provoked a *jihad* led by the landlords, tribal chiefs and mullahs. As the CIA undertook its biggest covert operation ever in support of the *mujahedin*, Afghanistan became the front line of the imperialist crusade to destroy the Soviet Union.

We underlined that for this extremely backward country with its minuscule proletariat, progress would have to be brought in from the outside. While the bulk of the left internationally lined up with the imperialists by denouncing the Soviet "invasion," we said: "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!" and called to extend the gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples.

The *mujahedin* forces, who threw acid in the faces of unveiled women and murdered those who dared teach schoolgirls to read, included those who went on to found the Taliban and Al Qaeda—Washington's Frankenstein's monster. Yet Washington's alliance with murderous religious fundamentalists hardly began in Afghanistan. In 1950, Cold Warrior John Foster Dulles pointed to a "common bond" with "the religions of the East" in fighting Communism. Today in Syria, the imperialists are once again allied with Islamic reactionaries in pursuit of their great-power interests.

For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!

The counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92 had a profoundly negative—albeit uneven—impact on working-class consciousness throughout the world. It also removed the central challenge to U.S. ambitions, allowing the American ruling class to project military power—not least in the Near East—and ride roughshod over anyone they perceive as standing in their way.

As Saddam Hussein and Muammar el-Qaddafi discovered to their misfortune and Assad is now learning, the imperialists have no compunction about turning on those local satraps who previously served their interests. The U.S. imperialists gave their approval when Syria under Hafez al-Assad, father of current president Bashar, intervened in the Lebanese civil war in 1976 to combat Palestinian forces. And in 1991, Syrian troops fought alongside U.S. forces in the first Gulf War against Iraq. Following the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, according to a February report by the Open Society Justice Initiative, Syria was one of the "most common destinations" in the "extraordinary rendition" program by which "terrorism" suspects were sent by the U.S. to other countries to be tortured.

Following a well-trodden path, the U.S.,

AFP

Tehran, May 6: Iranian and Syrian students demonstrate in front of UN offices against Israeli airstrikes on Syria.

Anti-Gay Killing...

(continued from page 12)

anger by talking up measures to prevent hate crimes in the city. In light of the approaching gay pride demonstrations in June, Quinn called for more police presence in parts of Manhattan.

Gay rights activists should understand that cops—the notoriously racist and brutal NYPD, no less—are not interested in "protecting" gay, lesbian and transgender people. The historic Stonewall riots, ignited following a police raid of the Stonewall Inn, were an act of defiance against commonplace police repression. LGBT people—especially blacks, immigrants, youth and the homeless—are victims of continued harassment and cruelty from the police. Recent protests against the NYPD's "stop and frisk" program have emphasized how gays and lesbians who are black—and thus face caste oppression based on the color of their skin—are doubly profiled and subject to police violence. Back in January, a 32-year-old black man, Jabbar Campbell, suffered a concussion and bruises from police beatings after his Brooklyn house was targeted during a gay pride party attended by transsexual and transvestite guests. Campbell, who is facing trumped up charges, has reported continued harassment by the cops.

A *New York Times* article last October on "vice" along a busy avenue in a heavily immigrant section of Queens

AP

May 20: Rally in Greenwich Village against series of attacks on gay men, including murder of Mark Carson.

described how gays and transgender people are repeatedly profiled as prostitutes and arrested by cops. One organizer for a community-based Latino group stated, "If a crime happens, people are not going to report it, because they don't trust the police."

In fact, one of the reasons accurate statistics for anti-gay attacks are almost impossible to determine is that many victims do not come forward out of fear of persecution from the authorities. And when cops are not carrying out the abuse themselves, they do a fine job ignoring or covering up the crime. When 62-year-old Queens resident and gay rights activist Louis Rispoli was found twitching on the pavement after a brutal assault last October, cops determined "no crime had been committed" and are currently obstructing an investigation into the incident. Rispoli died later from severe brain injuries.

Cops act to maintain and defend the capitalist order, from which every manner of racial and sexual oppression springs. Many LGBT activists try to exert pressure on the capitalist rulers to enact "hate crimes" legislation as a way to "deter" anti-gay violence. Such laws give a false sense of protection and put another weapon in the hands of the capitalist state that will be used to terrorize minority communities.

In capitalist America—a dictatorship of a tiny minority who exploit the working masses—economic and social desperation breed vile anti-gay hostility and other bourgeois rot. Anti-black racism, together with deep-going male chauvinism and religious backwardness, has historically been used by the capitalists to divide the working class. The same rulers who are hell-bent on shredding the hard-fought gains of unions and whose cops gun down black youth and Latinos on the streets have fostered the conditions in which attacks against gays can flourish. The fates of all those subject to oppression—homosexuals, women, immigrants, black people—are completely intertwined. The working class can never be won to an understanding of its historic role as the gravedigger of capitalism without a relentless fight against all manifestations of social prejudice and backward consciousness.

It will take proletarian revolution to sweep away the system that spawned the depraved killing of Mark Carson. The Spartacist League is committed to forging the vanguard party—a Leninist tribune of the people—needed to lead the working class to that victory. Only then can we can begin to build a truly egalitarian, socialist society. ■

British and French imperialists are justifying their campaign for "regime change" in Syria by singling out the Assad government for creating an "abhorrent humanitarian situation." As in their overthrow of Libya's Muammar el-Qaddafi in 2011, the U.S. rulers' current campaign in support of anti-Assad forces in Syria is being carried out in the name of "democracy," "freedom," and "human rights."

Striking a similar note is a statement published by the International Socialist Organization (ISO) on May 1 and signed by leading members of that organization as well as a host of liberal intellectuals and Arab nationalists. The "Global Campaign of Solidarity with the Syrian Revolution" statement hails the rebellion in Syria as a "revolution for freedom and dignity." Such "dignity" was on display in a recently revealed video that shows one Abu Sakkar, the commander of a rebel militia fighting in Qusayr, cutting an internal organ out of the body of a dead government soldier and biting into it.

This same commander has been widely quoted calling for the slaughter of all Alawites. According to the London *Guardian* (14 May), before forming his own militia late last year, "Sakkar was a well-known member of the Farouq Brigades," a "militia with mainstream leanings" that "became one of the rebels' best resourced fighting forces" due to financing from Qatar and Saudi Arabia. One could scarcely imagine a sharper contrast between our revolutionary Marxist perspective and that of our "socialist" opponents, who look to imperialist-backed forces that welcome such a monster as a leader.

WV Photo

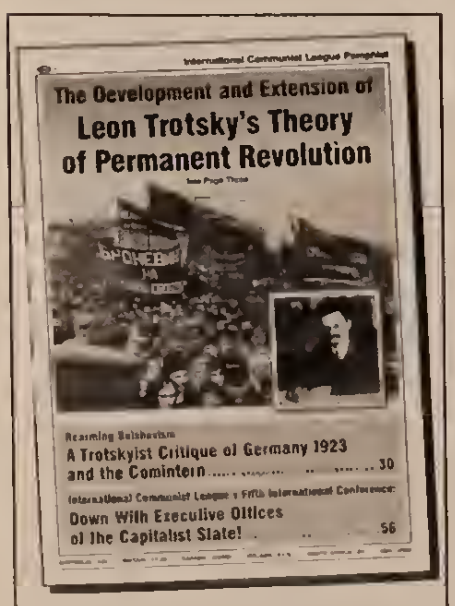
November 2012, NYC: Protest against Israeli attack on Gaza. Spartacist League puts forward revolutionary proletarian internationalist perspective for Near East, opposing all forms of nationalism.

We look to the proletariat of the Near East as the force with the social power and class interest to lead all the oppressed masses in a revolutionary overthrow of their capitalist rulers. The proletariat in power, having swept away all the capitalist regimes of the region and fighting to extend socialist revolution to the imperialist heartlands, can begin to resolve in an equitable way the murderous conflicts that threaten to rip the Near East apart. Only in a socialist federation of the Near East will there be a full and equal place for all the myriad peoples of the region—Sunnis, Shi'ites and Christians as well as the Kurdish, Palestinian Arab and Israeli Jewish nations.

From North Africa to Iran, sizable proletarian concentrations have the potential power to topple the capitalist regimes that subjugate hundreds of millions of people—all under the heel of imperialism. From Egyptian textile workers to workers in the Turkish auto plants and Iranian oil fields, the objective basis exists to forge the nucleus of revolutionary proletarian parties in the Near East. To bring to the fore the principle of international working-class unity across all national, religious and communal boundaries, Trotskyists struggle to build revolutionary workers parties throughout the Near East that will be forged in opposition to all forms of bourgeois ideology, religious reaction and imperialism and that will resolutely defend the right of all the peoples in the region to exist. In close collaboration with their comrades in the advanced industrial countries of North America, Europe and Japan as well as elsewhere in the semicolonial world, revolutionary workers parties in the Near East will be dedicated to the struggle for socialist revolutions from North Africa to the Persian Gulf.

We have no illusions that this will be an easy task. There is a vast gulf between the workers' present consciousness and the Marxist program of proletarian revolution. Notwithstanding the role of workers struggles in Tunisia and Egypt, the so-called "Arab Spring," hailed by reformists internationally as a revolution, in fact was nothing of the sort, resulting in the rise of Islamist regimes. Through their own experience in struggle and the intervention of revolutionary Marxist cadre, the workers of the Near East must be won to the program of proletarian internationalism that animated the October Revolution.

The alternative to this revolutionary perspective can be seen in the charnel house that is the Near East today, with tens of thousands of dead and millions displaced just by the Syrian civil war, not to mention the enslavement of women by religious fundamentalism. In the words of the great revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg, the choices facing humanity are socialism or barbarism. ■



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WORKERS VANGUARD

Obama's Reactionary Crusade Against Teen Birth Control

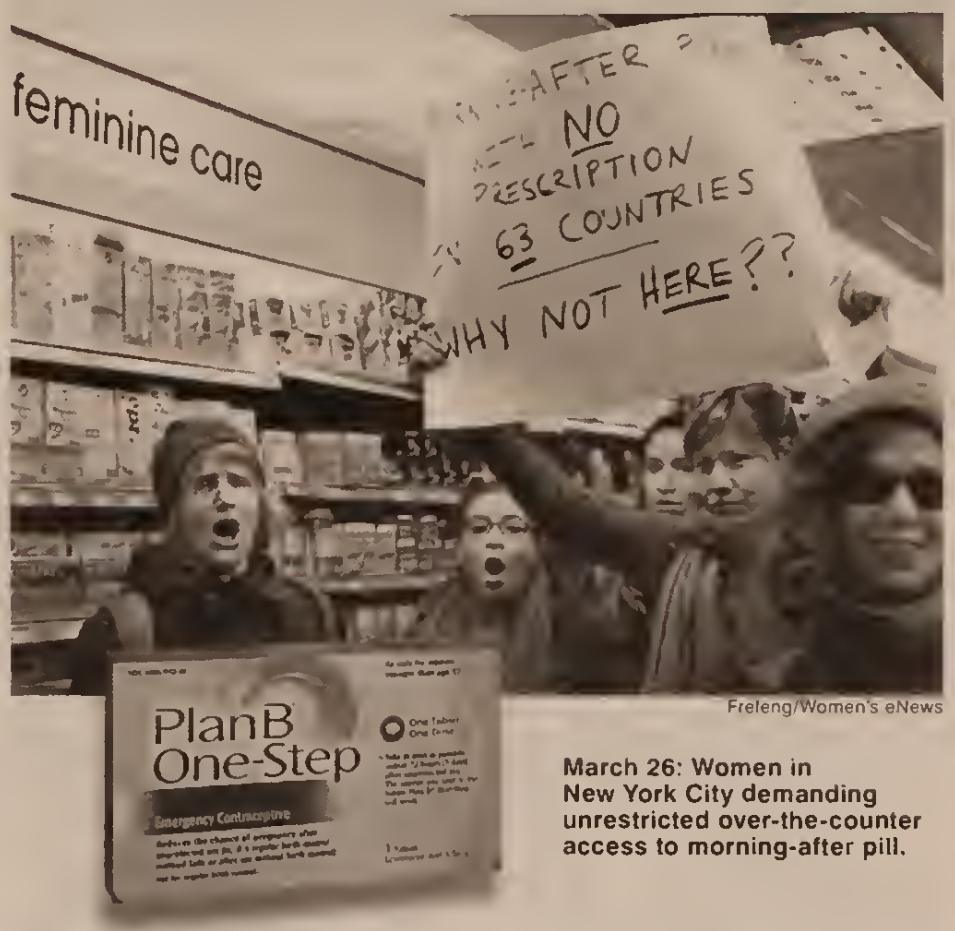
On April 26, Obama addressed a meeting of Planned Parenthood—one of the main providers of contraceptive and abortion services in the country. At the gala he intoned, "When it comes to a woman's health, no politician should get to decide what's best for you." Just days after this

Young Spartacus

display of shameless hypocrisy, the White House announced on May 1 it would challenge a federal court order that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) make "emergency contraceptives available without a prescription and without point-of-sale or age restrictions within thirty days." With its legal appeal, the Obama administration again made clear its intentions to "decide what's best" for teenage women.

Judge Edward Korman, who made the April 5 court ruling and subsequently rejected the government motion for a stay in mid May, lambasted the Obama administration and the FDA in his rulings and in the courtroom. He noted, "The effort to convert these levonorgestrel-based contraceptives from prescription to over-the-counter status has gone on for over twelve years, even though they would be among the safest drugs available to children and adults on any drugstore shelf." He dismissed some government arguments as "an insult to the intelligence of women."

Ten years ago, an FDA advisory committee voted overwhelmingly to approve over-the-counter access to the morning-after pill for all women. But the FDA never put this recommendation into effect, due to political pressure from the Bush administration. Then in December 2011 the FDA ruled that the Plan B One-Step pill could be sold over the counter to women of all ages. But the Secretary of Health and Human Services, backed by President Obama, made the unprecedented move of immediately overruling the agency. The government's appeal of the April 5 ruling was endorsed by anti-abortion outfits like the Susan B. Anthony List, which promotes several religious fanatics of the Republican Tea Party, like Paul Ryan and Michele Bachmann.



Freleng/Women's eNews

March 26: Women in New York City demanding unrestricted over-the-counter access to morning-after pill.

This administration has shown time and again that, despite not being the bizarrely "faith-based" regime it replaced, it is still beholden to religious moralism. Both administrations have been adamant that young people should not have sex, or—since everyone knows teens do it anyway—they should suffer the consequences. We say all contraception must be provided free of charge on demand, with no age or ID restrictions, no waiting periods and no state or parental control!

For politicians committed to the moral regimentation of society, accepting the reality of teenage sex is anathema. A comment from the *New England Journal of Medicine* (12 January 2012) has been proven right many times: "Any objective review makes it clear that Plan B is more dangerous to politicians than to adolescent girls." And the government's interference in the sexual lives of young people is not limited to birth control and abortion. Many teens also risk seeing their adult lovers jailed and put on a sex offenders list—especially if they are gay or lesbian (see article on page 9). Government out of the bedroom!

In this case the federal court is taking the exceedingly rare action of upholding scientific progress and basic liberties for women. But it is a debilitating illusion to rely on the courts of the class enemy to champion women's rights. For decades, the bourgeois feminists' dependence on the capitalist courts and the ballot box has aided the attacks on abortion by demobilizing protest. Feminist organizations like NARAL Pro-Choice America and the National Organization for Women hustle the vote for Democratic presidents who will appoint Supreme Court justices that maybe, just maybe, will "keep it safe and legal" for those who can afford it. This strategy reflects their capitalist outlook and social base as spokesmen for mostly white, successful, petty-bourgeois women. For free abortion on demand!

On April 30, the FDA announced new guidelines that the White House, the FDA and the drug company Teva carefully crafted to look like a reform, while changing very little in reality. This was a

continued on page 9

Outrage Over Anti-Gay Killing in Greenwich Village

NEW YORK—Around midnight on May 17, Mark Carson, a 32-year-old gay black man, was shot in the face at point-blank range in Greenwich Village. The assailant had been following Carson and a companion down the street, taunting them with anti-gay slurs before pulling the trigger. Three days later, thousands protested at a "rally against hate" to express outrage over the killing of Carson, who was open about his sexuality and well-respected by friends and family.

At the rally, which drew an integrated crowd near the site of the murder, Spartacist League supporters distributed our article on the 1998 murder of 18-year-old gay youth Matthew Shepard in Laramie, Wyoming, which stressed how defense of gay rights is in the interest of the whole of the working class. Much of the protesters' anger was connected to the sense that the "safety" of the Village—home of the 1969 Stonewall rebellion that sparked the gay rights movement—had been violated. For many years, the Christopher Street area in the Village had been one of very few places where the city's black and Latino LGBT youth could gather with some sense of security.

Anti-gay terror is not confined to the hinterlands. The media reports a doubling of attacks in New York City compared to last year. Within hours of the rally, at least two separate anti-gay attacks involving beatings in Lower Manhattan were reported. Last week, the cofounder of activist group Queer Rising was punched in the face near Times Square after being called "f--got."

In the era of gay marriage, when several Democrats (and some Republicans) are preaching tolerance for what is deemed an acceptable, i.e., monogamous and conservatizing, same-sex relationship, many are shocked by such blatant displays of anti-gay hatred. We support equal rights for gays while pointing out that, marriage rights or not, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people will continue to face deadly prejudice in this homophobic, class-divided society. Bigotry is not simply a result of narrow-mindedness or lack of education. The special oppression of women as well as gays is materially rooted in the entrenched norms decreed by the

Facebook

Mark Carson

sexual division of labor in the family under capitalism and enforced by religious moral codes.

Democratic Party politicians, seizing on this bigoted killing to garner votes for their candidacies, were among the organizers and speakers at the May 20 rally. Christine Quinn, who seeks to replace billionaire Michael Bloomberg and become New York City's first openly gay mayor, attempted to placate

continued on page 11

WORKERS VANGUARD

50¢

No. 1026

14 June 2013

Threatening Reporters, Spying on Public

Capitalist Surveillance State: Everyone's a Target

Google

Reuters

Top: Google data center in Iowa. Above: Government under Barack Obama, seen with George W. Bush in Dallas on April 25, has expanded program of domestic spying.

JUNE 10—George Orwell's Big Brother may have been watching, but Barack Obama and his secret police are wiretapping, seizing enormous quantities of phone records, mining electronic data and doing so much more we do not know about. What books and periodicals you read, who you chat with, what Internet sites you visit and other intimate details of your life are the daily fare of FBI and National Security Agency (NSA) snoops. Obama sugarcoats the massive spying operation as necessary for the population's own well-being. Add to the mix the other Orwellian newspeak—e.g., drone strikes save lives, secrecy is transparency, press freedom means subpoenas and indictments—and what you have is a creeping police state that is picking up the pace.

Obama's ongoing dustup with the basic constitutional rights of speech, press and privacy sprang into view last month when the Associated Press (AP) revealed that the Justice Department had secretly obtained two months of phone records for several AP reporters and editors. Then came the disclosure that Attorney General Eric Holder had authorized a warrant for the Feds to track Fox News reporter James Rosen's movements in and out of the State Department, trace the timing of his calls and read his e-mails.

Rosen had reported that U.S. intelligence believed that North Korea would respond to additional UN sanctions with more nuclear tests. His alleged informant, government employee Stephen Jin-Woo Kim, who did not steal any classified documents or sell secrets, faces more than a decade in prison on espionage charges. For supposedly encouraging Kim to speak to him, Rosen was named in the warrant application as an "aider, abettor and/or co-conspirator" in violation of the Espionage Act. With much of the bourgeois press corps howling in protest over the criminalization of standard journalistic practice, Obama bluntly declared: "I make no apologies."

The controversy over the government's low intensity warfare against the press was eclipsed by a series of disclosures last week giving a greater glimpse into the extent of government spying on the entire population. First the London *Guardian* reported on a secret court order authorizing the NSA to collect all phone records from Verizon Business Services on an "ongoing daily basis" through July 19. Officials have admitted that such accumulation of phone metadata—e.g., the numbers of callers and recipients, the serial numbers of the phones involved and the calls' timing and duration—has been going on for years.

The day after this data trawling came to light, the *Guardian* and *Washington Post* published accounts of the Prism Internet surveillance program. In agreement with nine industry giants, including Microsoft, Google, YouTube, Facebook, Yahoo, Skype and Apple, the NSA can access troves of private information communicated over their networks. Combing through the large volumes of audio, video, photos, e-mails, documents and connection logs with such data-mining tools as Boundless Informant, NSA technicians can readily assemble individual profiles and track movements and contacts over time.

The whistleblower who leaked the information about these clandestine activities, Edward Snowden, has since come forward to voice his repugnance with "a world where everything I do is recorded." A 29-year-old former CIA technical assistant who had been working at the NSA for the last four years as an employee of an outside contractor, Snowden elaborated in an interview with the *Guardian*'s Glenn Greenwald: "The NSA has built an infrastructure that allows it to intercept almost everything. With this capability, the vast majority of human communications are automatically ingested without targeting. If I wanted to see your e-mails or your wife's phone, all I have to do is use intercepts. I can get your e-mails, passwords, phone records, credit cards."

Having taken refuge in Hong Kong, Snowden also told Greenwald, "I do not expect to see home again." Indeed, soon after the interview was made public, top U.S. lawmakers from both sides of the aisle were howling for his head. According to Britain's *Daily Mail* today: "The United States may have already approached Interpol or its consulate in Hong Kong to start [extradition] proceedings. They will use the Espionage Act to gain warrants for his arrest." Meanwhile, the Director of National Intelligence, James Clapper, has asked the Justice Department to launch a criminal investigation into the leaks.

The public airing of the Feds' clandestine activities knocked the legs out from under Obama's plan to press Chinese leader Xi Jinping on cyber warfare in the summit that just concluded. While most Democratic and Republican politicians have backed Obama on the grounds of "national security," there have been some protests from both liberals and the libertarian right. In its June 6 editorial on Obama's data dragnet, the *New York Times* even offered that "the administration has now lost all credibility on this issue." Such rebukes from the bourgeois press and politicians reflect fear within the ruling class that it, too, is getting caught in the state surveillance web, one of the tools of repression whose central purpose is to keep the exploited and the oppressed in line.

Under fire, Obama justified such surveillance as crucial to defending the homeland against "terrorism." Following the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, the "war on terror" was launched as a rationale for the imperialist occupations of Afghanistan and later Iraq, as well as for expanding the repressive powers of the state at home. We have repeatedly warned that the draconian measures initially directed against Muslims and immigrants would lead to an assault on political dissent and the rights of all, particularly those of black people and the labor movement. The shredding of rights has since come to pass in spades.

During his tenure, the Democrat Obama has proved very capable in extending and expanding the "war on terror" policies of his Republican predecessor, not least the vast surveillance apparatus. Former Bush administration spokesman Ari Fleischer

continued on page 2

Reuters

House in eastern Yemen destroyed by September 2012 U.S. drone attack that killed at least six people.

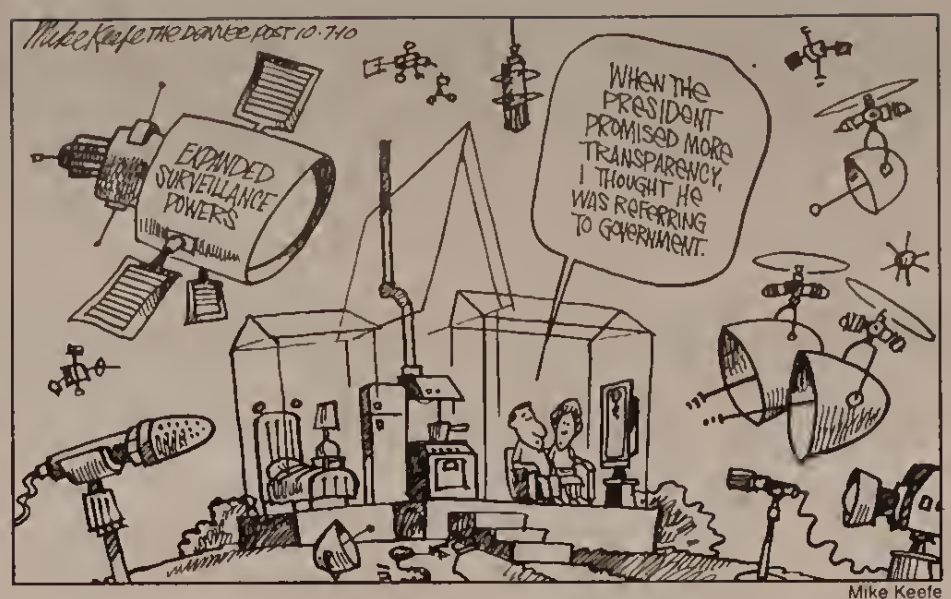
Surveillance...

(continued from page 1)

posted on Twitter last week: "Drone strikes. Wiretaps. Gitmo. O is carrying out Bush's 4th term." Despite the outcry by some in Congress to rein in the snooping, Senator Saxby Chambliss acknowledged, "Everyone's been aware of it for years, every member of the Senate," a fact confirmed by California Democratic Senator Dianne Feinstein. Proposals floated for greater "checks and balances" and more focused targeting are all aimed at streamlining and winning wider acceptance for government spying on the population.

As Marxists, we expect that the capitalist state, whether Democrats or Republicans are at the helm, will continue to eavesdrop on what the rulers term "persons of interest," not least those who oppose the blood-soaked capitalist order and its brutal repression. There is an inherent tendency for the state, which governs on behalf of a minuscule, ruthless class of obscenely wealthy exploiters, to attempt to amass ever greater power to control the population because it hates and fears the working people.

With a labor "leadership" that has prostrated itself before the capitalist rulers, the working class has taken it on the chin from a government flaunting constitutional rights while pursuing its slaughters abroad. But make no mistake: The bourgeoisie is determined to build up its powers of repression so that it is better able to smash any perceived threat to its rule and profits. At the same time, what it gets away with depends ultimately on the level of class and other social struggle. The working class will not advance its fight against exploitation without also defending the democratic rights of everyone and opposing the overseas savageries of its own ruling class.



Mike Keefe

"Welcome to America"

The government's spy network is expanding for the simple reason that it has the technology to do so. The genie is out of the bottle, and this or that piece of legislation or court order is not going to put it back. In a *Business Insider* (21 March) article titled "CIA Chief Tech Officer: Big Data Is the Future and We Own It," the CIA's Ira Hunt brags, "It is really very nearly within our grasp to be able to compute on all human generated information." Hunt described anybody carrying a mobile device as a "walking sensor platform"—now your gait, as measured by smartphone sensors, is distinctive enough to identify you.

The popularity of smartphones, tablets, social media sites and the like has brought with it an explosion of digital data that the spymasters have harnessed. Some 97 billion pieces of data were collected from networks worldwide in March alone. Just from phone metadata, analysts can weave a mosaic of a person's life, ferreting out all manner of correlations and patterns. As the executive director of the Electronic Privacy Information Center in Washington, D.C., observed, "The information associated with communications today is often more significant than the communications itself, and the people who do the data mining know that."

So it was with more than his characteristic sleight of hand that on June 7 Obama promised: "Nobody is listening to your telephone calls. That's not what this program's about." He similarly waved aside concerns over Prism, curtly intoning that it "does not apply to U.S. citizens and it does not apply to people living in the United States." In fact, enhancing the government's capacity to listen in and further pry is precisely what such programs are all about.

Last month, former FBI counterterrorism agent Tim Clemente was asked by CNN whether the government could retrieve the content of phone conversations between deceased Boston marathon bombing suspect Tamerlan Tsarnaev and his wife Katherine Russell. Clemente responded: "We certainly have ways in national security investigations to find out exactly what was said in that conversation. It's not necessarily something that the FBI is going to want to present in court, but it may help lead the investigation and/or lead to questioning of her." He added, "Welcome to America. All of that stuff is being captured as we speak whether we know it or like it or not."

In late 2005, it was revealed that the NSA was intercepting not only communications abroad but also those of U.S. citizens, without first procuring warrants. A glimpse of the scope of such snooping was provided by retired Bay Area AT&T worker Mark Klein, who came forward to reveal how the NSA had tapped into AT&T's fiber-optic cables to access much of the country's Internet data flow. Klein's revelations became Exhibit A in a lawsuit filed by the Electronic Frontier Foundation to expose and stop the illegal government data mining (see "Phone Worker Exposes Government Spying Network," *WV* No. 953, 26 February 2010). In a June 7 interview with the right-wing Libertas Institute, longtime NSA staffer William Binney noted about the NSA's original AT&T project: "They could get most of it, but they couldn't get it all. So in order to get all the data, they had to go to the service providers to fill in the blanks. That's what the Prism program is for—to fill in the blanks."

The AT&T data tap, as Binney noted in a 20 April 2012 interview with *Democracy Now!*, was "prepared to deploy about eight months before 9/11." Since those attacks, more than 30 secure complexes with a total size of three Pentagons have been constructed in the Washington, D.C., area to accommodate spying operations. In September, the NSA is slated to unveil its Utah Data Center in the desert town of Bluffdale, a $2 billion project. Churning through its servers and routers will be the complete contents of e-mails, cellphone calls, Google searches, parking receipts, travel itineraries, books purchased and much more. The NSA has separately created a supercomputer with the aim of breaking sophisticated encryption, one of the few ways people can protect their privacy. The simple truth is that in the "information age," the most secure way to communicate is to buy a postage stamp.

Institutionalizing the "War on Terror"

On May 23, with the spotlight then on drone killings of men, women and children overseas and on Guantánamo hunger strikers protesting their indefinite detention, Obama delivered a speech at the National Defense University pledging to wind down the "war on terror" and to protect the rights of journalists. He advised repealing the Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) to avoid keeping "America on a perpetual wartime footing." Adopted with overwhelming bipartisan support immediately after the September 11 attacks, the AUMF has been the legal pretext for U.S. imperialism's terrorization of workers, peasants and the impoverished around the world. Obama added, "I will not sign laws designed to expand this mandate further." He also spoke of creating new protections for civil liberties "to strike the appropriate balance between our need for security and preserving those freedoms that make us who we are."

The *New York Times* gushed with joy that their prodigal son had finally come home. In an editorial posted online the same day, the *Times* hailed the speech as "a momentous turning point in post-9/11 America." The statement also lauded the president's shift in drone policy, e.g., turning the CIA's fleet of drones over to the military—the significance of which will certainly be lost on the masses in Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen.

Momentous? About as much as a New York Mets loss. Turning point? Depends on how you look at it. Rather than articulating a change in policy, Obama's speech marked the institutionalization of the panoply of post-September 11 repressive measures and laws as permanent fixtures of the American legal system. Obama is for discarding the AUMF not just because it is no longer necessary—the powers assumed under its authority are authorized by the Patriot Act and Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) as well as Obama's own presidential directives—but also because it serves as an unwelcome reminder that those powers were supposed to be temporary exigencies.

Obama's speech was his Michael Corleone moment, recalling the christening scene in *The Godfather* in which Corleone promises to renounce Satan and all his works at the very moment his lieutenants are carrying out a murderous vendetta against Mafia rivals. Since Obama "renounced" the war on terror, more drones have struck in Pakistan's tribal areas while the government vendetta against reporters and whistleblowers proceeds apace, as does the massive government spy operation.

Perhaps most ominous in Obama's oration was the redefinition of due process. Obama asserted, "I do not believe it would be constitutional for the government to target and kill any U.S. citizen—with a drone, or a shotgun—without due process." What he meant was seen in the drone assassination in Yemen two years ago of Anwar al-Awlaki, a U.S. citizen who was an Al Qaeda publicist. The president stated: "My administration submitted

continued on page 10

TROTSKY

Truth as a Revolutionary Weapon

In a polemic against the hypocritical "morality" of the bourgeoisie, which defends its rule through systematic violence and deception, Leon Trotsky upheld the proletarian morality of the Bolshevik Party that led the October Revolution of 1917. In light of the subsequent destruction of that party under the Stalinist bureaucracy, Trotsky reaffirmed the revolutionary integrity embodied by Lenin's Bolsheviks as crucial to the struggle for a socialist order.

LENIN

"All that arises is worthy of perishing," says the dialectician Goethe. The perishing of the Bolshevik Party—an episode in world reaction—does not, however, disparage its worldwide historic significance. In the period of its revolutionary ascendance, that is, when it actually represented the proletarian vanguard, it was the most honest party in history. Wherever it could, of course, it deceived the class enemies; on the other hand it told the toilers the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Only thanks to this did it succeed in winning their trust to a degree never before achieved by any other party in the world.

The clerks of the ruling classes call the organizers of this party "amoralists." In the eyes of conscious workers this accusation carries a complimentary character. It signifies: Lenin refused to recognize moral norms established by slave-owners for their slaves and never observed by the slave-owners themselves; he called upon the proletariat to extend the class struggle into the moral sphere too. Whoever fawns before precepts established by the enemy will never vanquish that enemy!

The "amoralism" of Lenin, that is, his rejection of supra-class morals, did not hinder him from remaining faithful to one and the same ideal throughout his whole life; from devoting his whole being to the cause of the oppressed; from displaying the highest conscientiousness in the sphere of ideas and the highest fearlessness in the sphere of action; from maintaining an attitude untainted by the least superiority to an "ordinary" worker, to a defenseless woman, to a child. Does it not seem that "amoralism" in the given case is only a pseudonym for higher human morality?

—Leon Trotsky, *Their Morals and Ours* (1938)

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NOTICE

***Workers Vanguard* skips alternate issues in June, July and August. Our next issue will be dated July 12.**

Fascist Gang Kills Leftist Youth

Paris

The following leaflet was issued by our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyste de France and distributed at a protest demonstration in Paris denouncing the beating death of leftist Clément Méric by fascists.

* * *

JUNE 6—Clément Méric, an 18-year-old political science student and supporter of Action Antifasciste, was killed yesterday by a gang of skinheads apparently linked to Jeunesses Nationalistes Révolutionnaires [the fascist Revolutionary Nationalist Youth] in a shopping district in central Paris at 6 p.m. This crime casts a spotlight on the rise of fascist violence in France over the past year against leftists and homosexuals, which gained new momentum with the reactionary mobilizations against gay marriage. As we said in *Le Bolchévik* No. 204 (June 2013):

> "The fascists are not only beginning to get record vote totals in by-elections, but provocations by paramilitary gangs against homosexuals and leftists have begun to rise exponentially. They must be crushed before they become a credible force that the bourgeoisie can consider as the best alternative available to subdue the working class; all historical experience shows that what is necessary to stop the fascists is not votes, whether for supporters of [Left Party leader Jean-Luc] Mélenchon or for others, but rather ***labor/immigrant mobilizations, based on the power of the organized proletariat.***"

It is urgent for the trade unions and the entire workers movement to take up the defense of their own members and more broadly lead mobilizations that include the oppressed who are threatened by the fascists—homosexuals, immigrants, their children and grandchildren, women, etc.

The rise of fascist terror is a product of the global economic crisis, which is felt particularly acutely in Europe. The crisis impels the different bourgeoisies to wage an even more brutal struggle against their respective working classes in order to restore the rate of profit. In Greece, where the working class is under extreme attack, the fascists of Golden Dawn openly hunt down immigrants on the streets of Athens.

The Franco-German (and Italian-British) interimperialist alliance called the "European Union" is in a profound crisis. The French imperialist bourgeoisie is at an impasse; day after day it continues to lose ground to its rivals, mainly Germany. The chauvinist and protectionist tirades of Arnaud Montebourg [Socialist minister of industrial recovery] legitimize those of Le Pen [leader of the fascist National Front]. The purpose is to rally the French working class behind its own bourgeoisie against rivals in other countries as well as to make the workers accept further sacrifices.

AFP

June 8: Paris demonstration protesting killing of 18-year-old Clément Méric by fascists.

For Labor/Immigrant Mobilizations to Crush the Fascists!

The capitalists and their government are carrying out attacks of unprecedented violence against the working class. There is the ANI [agreement between some unions and the bosses], which means the destruction of entire sections of the labor law that regulates layoffs. The government has also announced a plan attacking pensions that makes those put forward previously by [conservative politicians] Balladur, Fillon and Sarkozy seem like light jabs. And for years now, governments, whether of the left or right, have been escalating their attacks against immigrants and minority youth who are a key component of the proletariat in this country. The working class, meanwhile, has so far been impeded by the union bureaucracies' support for the popular-front government of the Socialist Party (SP) and Greens. Such support is coated with criticisms in an attempt to push the government a little to the left.

The fascists today are mainly attacking homosexuals, people they consider non-white and open leftists. But their real target is the destruction of the workers movement, including the trade unions. Fascism is the mobilization of the ruined petty bourgeoisie enraged by the crisis of capitalism, targeting not the capitalist system but the working class, the only social force capable of overthrowing this system in its state of advanced decay.

Today, this phenomenon remains relatively marginal in France. The bourgeoisie prefers, if possible, to use parliamentarism and the collaboration of the reformist labor tops to impose its rule. But in the case of a serious threat to its property, the bourgeoisie will not hesitate for a moment to hand over power to the fascist scum in order to break the back of the working class. This was done in Italy in 1922, Germany in 1933. And in France we had [the Nazi collaborator] Pétain.

Fascism is a phenomenon inherent to capitalism. The only way to eradicate it once and for all is to overthrow the whole capitalist system through workers revolution and to extend the revolution internationally. ***For a Socialist United States of Europe!***

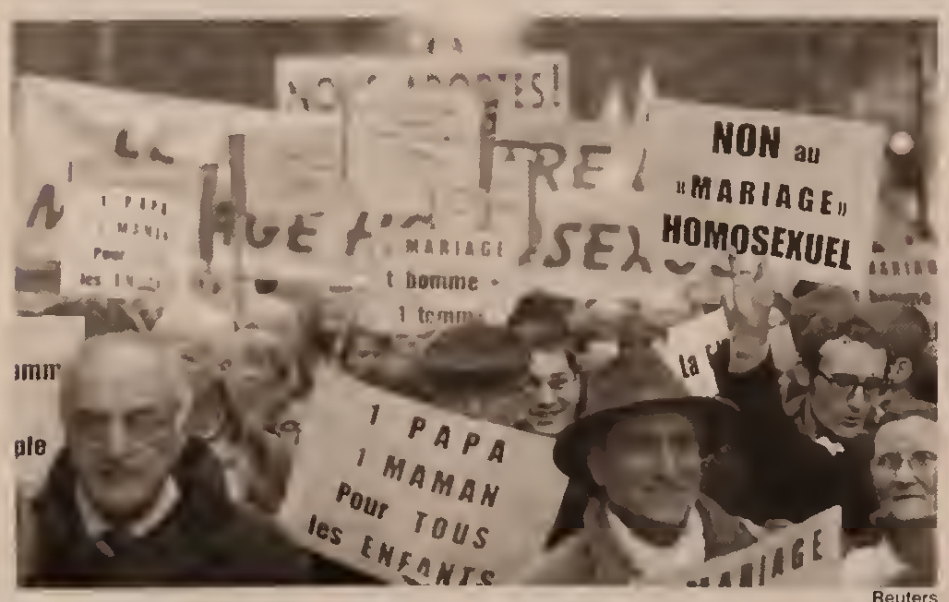
The problem is that the French left is ***opposed*** to such a perspective. And this is not surprising, given that the Left Party, Communist Party (PCF) and New Anti-Capitalist Party (NPA) called for a vote for [Socialist president François] Hollande in the last election, while Lutte Ouvrière (LO) left its followers free to vote for Hollande or abstain. The Left Party's Mélenchon seized on the murder of Clément Méric to demand a strengthening of police action by his former comrade Manuel Valls, the minister of cops. This despite the fact that the explosion of racist police terror orchestrated by Valls against the Roma [Gypsies] and against Islamists directly paved the way for the fascists. The Left Party is calling for the "dissolution of right-wing groups that are escalating their violent acts" (*20 Minutes*, 6 June). The government has insisted it would proceed "democratically," according to the law—by which they mean legitimizing laws "against violence" that also threaten the working class. Already, the UMP [Union for a Popular Movement of former president Nicolas Sarkozy] today called for a crackdown against left "extremism" as well. [Since this leaflet was written, SP prime minister Jean-Marc Ayrault has announced that the government intends to dissolve the Revolutionary Nationalist Youth.]

The 1936 law banning fascist leagues was used in 1937 to ban the *Etoile Nord-Africaine* (precursor of the Algerian National Liberation Front—FLN) and also in the wake of the May 1968 general strike to ban the predecessors of Lutte Ouvrière and the NPA in June 1968. Any strengthening of the police apparatus will be turned against the working class. The job of the police and the state is not to defend the population against murderers. These are armed bodies of men committed to the defense of the capitalist system. The capitalist "justice" system has, in fact, demanded that all charges be dropped against the cops involved in the deaths of Zyad Benna and Bouna Traoré, which triggered the 2005 revolt in the *banlieues* [minority and working-class neighborhoods on the outskirts of big cities].

As for the Parisian cops (to mention only them), their forebears carried out the Vel d'Hiv Roundup [of Jews in 1942] and the massacre of hundreds of Algerians in Paris on 17 October 1961. Today *banlieue* youth are more likely to die from an encounter with the cops than with the fascists, as shown by the trial underway in Villiers-le-Bel. The cop responsible for the deaths of Mouhsin and Lakamy in 2007 was free to attend court while the youth who protested their deaths were locked up and sentenced to up to 15 years. ***The workers movement must defend*** ***banlieue youth against racist terror!***

Police and fascists serve the same capitalist masters against the working class, by different methods. In recent months our German comrades have pointed to the interpenetration of the fascists and the cops, with the trial today of the NSU [Underground Nazis] group, which murdered, among others, several Turkish citizens (see *Spartakist* No. 195, October 2012). Calls on the bourgeois state to take action against the fascists are

continued on page 7



Reuters

Philippe Huynh-Minh

Reactionary mobilizations against gay marriage bill, such as November 2012 Paris rally (left), have emboldened fascists like Jeunesses Nationalistes Révolutionnaires (right).

Canadian Social Democrats

It's Official: NDP Drops Last Pretense to "Socialism"

We reprint the following article from Spartacist Canada *No. 177 (Summer 2013), newspaper of the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste, Canadian section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).*

SPARTACIST CANADA

The 2011 election catapulted the federal New Democrats to official opposition status in Ottawa. Two years later, the NDP continues its march away from the labour movement and anything even hinting of socialism. At its April convention in Montreal, the party voted by a large margin to drop from the preamble of its constitution a paper commitment to "democratic socialist principles." Gone too is the previous mild aversion to profit-driven production, as well as the vague allusion to social ownership "where necessary." The new preamble upholds Canada, imperialist exploiter of workers in Latin America, Africa and beyond, as "a great country, one of the hopes of the world."

The stated aim of the NDP leadership is to position the party among "progressive democratic political parties that govern successfully in many countries," the obvious model being the capitalist Democratic Party in the U.S. Thus the Montreal convention welcomed two leading Democratic Party figures to give key speeches. One, Jeremy Bird, was national field director for Barack Obama's 2012 campaign. The other was Joseph Stiglitz, an economic advisor to an earlier U.S. imperialist chieftain, Bill Clinton, and a former vice-president and chief economist at the World Bank. Stiglitz actually cautioned the NDP against moving too far to the right: "Don't do what Labour did in the UK and say we have to privatize everything" (*National Post*, 13 April).

These moves to distance the party from any hint of working-class politics come in the context of the continued hammering of working people by the ruling exploiters and the severe weakening of the unions. But there's nothing new in its political logic. The NDP has always been a very right-wing, pusillanimous social-democratic party. Its fidelity to the interests of Canadian capitalism has never been in question. Only those living in a social-democratic fog—reformists whose life work centres on trying to push the NDP to the left—would claim that its tepid program ever had anything to do with socialism, i.e., the emancipation of the working class from capitalist wage slavery.

Reuters

NDP leader Thomas Mulcair at April party convention in Montreal.

The NDP has historically been what Marxists call a ***bourgeois workers party***. Organically based in the labour movement, at least in part, it nonetheless upholds and enforces the rule of capital. During the late 1940s, a time of rising class struggle, the NDP's Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) predecessors knew they had to sink roots in organized labour in order to channel growing discontent into capitalist electoralism. At bottom, their purpose was to ward off any threat of workers revolution.

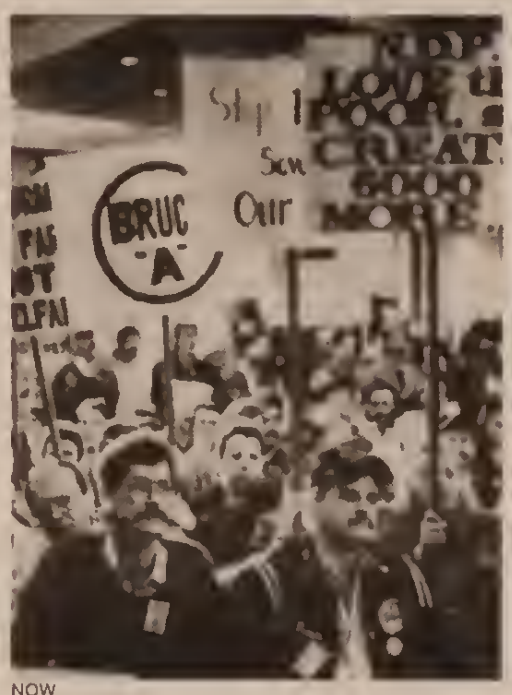
In the first instance, that required displacing the Communist Party (CP) which, in spite of its Stalinist and Canadian nationalist leadership, had led many of the struggles that produced the explosive growth of the unions and had significantly more weight inside them. The CCF played a central role in the purges that drove CP and other militants out of the unions in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The labour movement came under the control of an anti-Communist bureaucracy whose political descendants run it to this day. Elevated above the working class on the basis of superprofits derived from exploitation of the underdeveloped world, these bureaucrats view the world through the same prism as the Canadian ruling class. The ties between the CCF and the Canadian Labour Congress were cemented in 1961 when they jointly founded the NDP as "labour's political arm."

The New Democrats' aim has *always* been to administer capitalism on behalf of the bourgeoisie, and they have done this repeatedly at the provincial level, including today in Manitoba and Nova Scotia. In the present period, with labour struggles at a nadir and seeing an opportunity to displace the Liberals as the main alternative to the ruling federal Tories [the Conservative Party], the NDP brass increasingly views the labour connection as a liability to its electoral aspirations.

This trajectory gathered steam under the leadership of the late Jack Layton. Federal laws enacted starting in 2004 greatly reduced and then banned union (and corporate) donations to political parties. Since the unions no longer financed the NDP, their voting weight within it was accordingly reduced. After the 2011 breakthrough, Layton and the rest of the party brass moved to ditch the "socialist" baggage. There was blowback, so they temporarily retreated. Thomas Mulcair, who moved seamlessly from the Quebec Liberal Party cabinet into the NDP's upper echelons, has simply deepened and accelerated the process.

As Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, the NDP leaves no doubt as to its class loyalties. Take its response to the vast increase in state surveillance and repression under the "war on terror." Denouncing recent Tory spending cuts, NDP spokesman Robert Chisholm railed: "If the government is serious about dealing with terrorist threats, it should restore the $134 million that is being cut from CBSA [border guards]." He vowed that an NDP government would reverse the Tory cuts in funding to the RCMP and the CSIS secret police.

The New Democrats also seek to outdo the Tories in anti-Communist China-bashing. They branded the government's approval of the sale of the Nexen oil company to a state-run Chinese corporation as the "worst Conservative lowlight of 2012." Denouncing the Tories for giving China "increased access to our strategic natural resources," the NDP asked rhetorically: "Maybe they'll add a seat in Parliament for the Chinese politburo next session?" Such foam-flecked anti-Communism is deeply rooted. The New Democrats were vociferous soldiers in the imperialists' Cold War against the Soviet Union, and have always backed the drive to foment counterrevolution in countries where capitalist rule was overthrown through social revolution, including China, a bureaucratically deformed workers state.



NOW

Canadian Press

Left: 1993 union protest against layoffs by Ontario NDP government. Above: British Columbia NDP government oversaw 1995 police crackdown on Native activists at Gustafsen Lake.

Saving the NDP's "Socialist Soul"

So what of the NDP "left"? At the convention, two reformist outfits, Fightback and Socialist Action (SA), worked tirelessly to steer the NDP back to its wretched social-democratic origins. Fightback is the Canadian offspring of the British Labourite grouping founded by Ted Grant, today known as the International Marxist Tendency. From its inception, it has centred its work on the call "NDP to power on a socialist program!" For its part, SA, despite its occasional Marxist pretensions, has been buried in the NDP for at least 15 years as the prime mover of the badly misnamed "Socialist Caucus."

At the convention, Socialist Caucus spokesman and SA leader Barry Weisleder was one of the foremost advocates of keeping "socialism" in the NDP constitution. In a follow-up article calling to "keep the principle of social ownership at the heart of the NDP," Weisleder invokes not Marx, Engels, Lenin or Trotsky but...various prominent NDP figures dead and alive, starting with party founder Tommy Douglas. The article's abject final plea is: "Together, let's create a global cooperative commonwealth" (socialistaction.ca, 30 April).

For Fightback, the results of the NDP convention were "tragic." But they're far from disheartened, writing: "Socialism cannot be 'amended' out of the NDP. It has been there since the founding of the CCF and NDP, and it takes energy from the struggles of the youth, of workers, and of oppressed peoples" (marxist.ca, 16 April). Given the opportunity to write an opinion column in the *Toronto Star* (10 April), a Fightback spokesman asked, "Will a NDP federal government fight for the cause for which the party was founded?" Yes, it will—the cause of the NDP has *never* been socialism, but corralling workers into the dead end of parliamentary reformism.

Instead of the necessary fight to win the most class-conscious workers away from these political agents of capital, reformist groups like SA and Fightback work to reinforce the hold of social-democratic ideology, which they fundamentally share. "Socialism" is not a more benevolent capitalist order ruled by an imagined NDP government that taxes the rich and (sometimes) hands out a few crumbs to the workers.

continued on page 11

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Reagan's Guatemalan Death Squad Dictator

Ríos Montt: Mass Murderer

Efraín Ríos Montt came to power as Guatemala's strongman in a military coup in March 1982, overthrowing another bloody dictator, and was in turn overthrown in a similar coup in August 1983. During that brief period, he presided over some of the most gruesome crimes against workers and peasants, especially indigenous Maya-Ixil people, that took place during a 36-year civil war that pitted U.S.-backed dictators against a left-wing guerrilla insurgency. Officially, over 200,000 were killed and 45,000 more "disappeared" during the civil war, out of a population of some eight to ten million. As we noted last month, a Guatemalan court found Ríos Montt guilty of genocide and other crimes against humanity (see "U.S. Imperialism's Machinery of Torture," *WV* No. 1024, 17 May). Subsequently, however, a higher Constitutional Court quashed the verdict on a technicality, and a new trial may not begin until April 2014, if in fact there will be a new trial.

The slaughter in Guatemala was fully supported by the U.S. rulers as they launched Cold War II in the late 1970s and early '80s against the Soviet Union. Washington also backed El Salvador's death squad regime as it was battling a leftist insurgency and armed and trained the contra reactionaries fighting to overthrow the Sandinista government in Nicaragua.

Regardless of the ultimate outcome of Ríos Montt's trial, what compels the verdict of history was the litany of horror recounted by the survivors of the slaughter he oversaw. The *New York Times* (27 March) reported: "The witnesses included a man testifying about how the Guatemalan Army under Mr. Ríos Montt killed his wife and two children, slashing his 5-year-old son's face with a machete and smashing his toddler's head. Another described how his pregnant sister was tied to a stake and burned alive, along with her child and six additional children. One witness, Nicolas Brito, told of seeing soldiers cut out and stack victims' hearts on a table." A number of women testified to the mass rapes that they endured. One reported being raped—she was 12 years old at the time—after being forced to watch the rape of her mother, who died. Many witnesses spoke in the Ixil language, as they had no Spanish capacity.

The *New Yorker* ("The Maya Genocide Trial," 3 May) reported:

> "There were wrenching accounts of military assaults on Ixil towns with names like Xesayi, Chel, and Tu B'aj Sujsiban; of old people slain when they were too old to flee; of infants tossed into the flames of burning houses; of unborn children being cut out of pregnant women's uteruses; of captives being held in holes in the ground, raped in churches.... A former soldier testified that, as far as he could tell, his orders were simple: *Indio visto, Indio muerte*. ('Indian seen, Indian dead.')"

Outside the court, supporters of Ríos Montt and his ilk protested with military music and signs reading: "Communism Finances the Destruction of National Unity." Judges and prosecutors involved in the case received death threats. Strong opposition to the guilty verdict came particularly from Guatemala's powerful business federation known as Cacif.

During the proceedings, a witness for the prosecution—a mechanic in the military during the Ríos Montt regime—implicated current Guatemalan president Otto Pérez Molina's participation in massacres when he was the commander in the Ixil region. Investigative journalist Allan Nairn, who is well-versed in Guatemalan affairs, met Pérez Molina in 1982, when his troops described executing and torturing villagers. In an interview conducted at the time, which has been posted on YouTube, Pérez Molina tells Nairn: "The truth is that there is a very real saying: that the civilian population is to the guerrilla what water is to fish. In this case, the guerrilla could not survive if he does not have the support and cooperation of the population."

Reuters

Jean-Marie Simon

Victims of 1982 massacre of "suspected guerrillas" by Guatemalan army under Efraín Ríos Montt (inset), shown at genocide trial in Guatemala City, May 9.

In wiping out entire villages in order to combat leftist insurgents, Pérez Molina & Co. carried out on their local turf the types of atrocities that U.S. forces committed on a much wider scale in seeking to crush social revolutions in Korea and Vietnam in the 1950s and '60s. During Ríos Montt's trial, the U.S. ambassador to Guatemala and the State Department's top official for human rights sat in the audience. Two weeks after the conviction was overturned, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry met Pérez Molina in Antigua, Guatemala, the site of a General Assembly of the Organization of American States. Kerry stated: "Let me begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, on the enormous progress that you have made with respect to your justice system, the strengthening of your justice system, the independence of that system" (U.S. Department of State, 4 June).

U.S. Imperialism's Bloody Hand

That the U.S. placed in power and/or supported military strongmen to keep Latin American and Caribbean countries "free" for United Fruit and other such interests has been amply documented. Also well known is Washington's drive to "roll back Communism," from the CIA-organized Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961 to the efforts to crush leftist insurgents in Central America in the 1980s. That one of the U.S.-supported despots was tried for crimes against humanity in his own country is, however, a first. Those crimes took a particularly racist and bloody form in Guatemala, particularly during the Ríos Montt regime. Aryeh Neier, a founder and former executive director of Human Rights Watch, wrote that Guatemala is "the only country in Latin America for which it would be appropriate to use the word 'genocide' to describe the crimes committed since World War II" (*New York Review of Books*, 20 June). Now the author of those crimes remains a free man.

Conspicuously absent from the dock in the genocide trial was the U.S. government, its military and secret police. As we wrote in "Guatemala: CIA's Mass Murder Inc." (*WV* No. 621, 21 April 1995):

> "The truth is that for 40 years, Washington did far more than simply 'aid' Guatemala's brutal military gang in enforcing the rule of the local *latifundistas*, capitalists and their Wall Street masters. Left to their own devices, these butchers would have been plenty barbaric.... But it was the United States government which purposely and deliberately planned, financed, supplied, trained and directed the transformation of a monstrous but inefficient gang of thugs into a modern, scientifically organized machine of systematic mass murder, torture and terror. U.S. imperialism inflicted on the desperately poor and exploited working people and the Mayan Indian majority of this small country horrors with few parallels in history."

Ríos Montt's reign of mass murder coincided with the early years of Ronald Reagan's administration, which oversaw the ramping up of Cold War II against the Soviet Union. The groundwork for that campaign was prepared by Democratic president and professional hypocrite Jimmy Carter, who wielded the "human rights" card in an effort to refurbish U.S. imperialism's credentials after its stunning defeat in Vietnam. Carter made a show of cutting off aid to the Guatemalan officers in protest of their abuses. But this was a cynical maneuver. Close U.S. allies, such as apartheid South Africa, Taiwan and South Korea, increasingly stepped in with support. Most important was Israel, which provided financial aid, arms and training for Washington's reactionary killers.

Reagan avidly embraced Ríos Montt, a fundamentalist Protestant who received counterinsurgency training at Fort Bragg and also served as a department head at the Inter-American Defense College in Washington, D.C. Ríos Montt's main qualification was that he had the stomach for the dirty work. When he launched his "scorched earth" offensive against highland Mayan villagers, among whom leftist guerrillas had won support, the main question for Washington was how to speed up, beef up and further legitimize U.S. support to that effort.

In a memo to President Reagan shortly before Reagan met Ríos Montt for the first time, Secretary of State George Shultz wrote that the coup that installed him "presents us with an opportunity to break the long freeze in our relations with Guatemala and to help prevent an extremist takeover." Reagan trumpeted that Ríos Montt was a man "totally dedicated to democracy," with "great personal integrity and commitment" ("Guatemala's Genocide on Trial," the *Nation*, 22 May). Elliott Abrams, Reagan's top human rights official in the State Department, not only peddled the administration line that Ríos Montt was a reformer but also helped sell Washington's plan to lift the (much abrogated) embargo on military aid.

Writing in the *Nation* (17 April 1995), Allan Nairn listed half a dozen top Guatemalan officers paid by the CIA, including at least three chiefs of the country's military intelligence unit, a former army chief of staff and General Hector Gramajo, a former defense minister. Nairn quoted the former U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency chief in Guatemala, Colonel George Hooker: "It would be an embarrassing situation if you ever had a roll call of everybody in the Guatemalan Army who ever collected a C.I.A. paycheck." That roll call would have to reach back to the 1950s Cold War against the Soviet Union, the workers state that issued from the Bolshevik-led October Revolution of 1917. Despite its subsequent Stalinist bureaucratic degeneration, the Soviet Union stood as an impediment to Washington's ability to project power at will throughout the world. Up until the counterrevolutionary destruction of the USSR in 1991-92, the U.S. imperialists were intent on destroying the Soviet workers state and anyone they saw as furthering its interests.

In 1954, the U.S. engineered the overthrow of bourgeois-populist Guatemalan president Jacobo Arbenz, who had attempted to institute such reforms as nationalizing some of United Fruit's land. Arbenz ordered that unused land, which included 85 percent of the company's holdings, be purchased at its declared value and distributed to landless peasants. This did not sit at all well in Washington; Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and his brother, CIA chief Allen Dulles, were connected to United Fruit's law firm, and the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Henry Cabot Lodge Jr., was a big stockholder. More to the point, it was the Cold War that underlay the anti-Communist frenzy over Arbenz's modest agrarian reforms. Minor participation in his government by the tiny Stalinist Guatemalan Labor Party (PGT) was seized upon to launch a red-scare propaganda campaign and direct backing for reactionary cutthroats.

An example of news coverage at the time was a *New York Times* (8 November 1953) article on the arrival in Guatemala of John E. Peurifoy as the new U.S. ambassador. It read in part: "It is generally expected in Guatemala that his advent means a change in the asserted passivity

continued on page 11

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19 June 1953: The Cold War Execution of the Rosenbergs

Sixty years ago this month, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, Jewish Communists from New York, were murdered by the U.S. capitalist state for the alleged crime of spying for the Soviet Union. Against the backdrop of bloodcurdling cries to "fry the Reds," the Rosenbergs were subjected to a grotesque show trial on charges of "conspiring" to pass the "secret of the atomic bomb" to the USSR during World War II. The frame-up featured perjured testimony and concocted evidence as well as the stoking of anti-Semitism. With the trial coming at the height of McCarthyite anti-Communist hysteria, this was enough to secure a conviction.

Judge Irving Kaufman consulted with the prosecution before condemning the Rosenbergs to death. During sentencing, he took the opportunity to accuse the Rosenbergs of treason—defined by the Constitution as giving aid and comfort to the enemy in wartime—even though the Soviet Union was an ally of the U.S. during World War II! While liberal and social-democratic apologists for the government have come forward over the years claiming to "prove" the Rosenbergs' guilt, these attempts have all fallen apart under the slightest scrutiny.

As the *Militant* (27 October 1952), published by the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP), wrote in an editorial following the Supreme Court's refusal to review the conviction: "The Rosenberg decision above all else was an act of ruling-class terror by a state that is preparing a war of world conquest, a war directed primarily against the Soviet Union.... It was far more a political than a spy trial. There is no other way to explain why the Rosenbergs, who were charged with playing the least important role of all those involved in the atomic espionage, should alone have been given the ultimate sentence."

For Marxists, the central issue in the Rosenberg case was the defense of the Soviet workers state against imperialism. The U.S. had emerged from World War II as the predominant imperialist power, with a monopoly on atomic weapons. The main impediment to its world designs was the Soviet Union, which had issued out of the 1917 seizure of power by the Bolshevik-led working class in Russia. Despite its subsequent degeneration under Stalinist bureaucratic misrule, the USSR continued to embody key social gains of the October Revolution, centrally a planned economy and collectivized property. It was an urgent task of the working class to defend the Soviet Union—just as we Spartacists today defend the bureaucratically deformed workers states of China, Cuba, Laos, North Korea and Vietnam.

AP

Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, American Communists charged with spying for Soviet Union, at New York City trial, January 1951.

Julius Rosenberg was arrested less than a year after the first Soviet A-bomb test threw the U.S. rulers into a frenzy. As we wrote in "They're Trying to Kill the Rosenbergs All Over Again" (*WV* No. 340, 21 October 1983):

> "Those who helped the Russians achieve nuclear capacity did a great service for humanity. Had U.S. imperialism maintained a nuclear monopoly, it would have meant historic defeats for the international proletariat. It would have meant nuclear destruction from Southeast Asia to Latin America. Who can doubt that U.S. imperialism would have destroyed Vietnam totally with nuclear weapons if they did not fear a retaliatory Soviet strike? Would Cuba exist today if the U.S. had a nuclear monopoly?"

The late 1940s and '50s in the U.S. was a time of widespread persecution of Communists, labor militants, other leftists and also some liberals classified as "Communist sympathizers." Witchhunters such as Senator Joseph McCarthy destroyed the careers of such "subversives" in all walks of American life, but especially the labor movement. Some 25,000 union members, many of them key leaders of the CIO organizing drives of the 1930s, were purged, in some cases leading to the destruction of whole unions. Thousands more were tracked down by the FBI and driven from their jobs, only to continue to be hounded and witchhunted due to employer blacklists.

While belatedly coming to the defense of the Rosenbergs amid the Cold War atmosphere of repression, the SWP correctly recognized the centrality of the Soviet Union in the Rosenberg case and hailed the USSR's nuclear capacity. In contrast, most of the rest of the left in the United States refused to defend the Rosenbergs. This included their comrades in the leadership of the Communist Party (CP), who did not even mention the case until after the trial was over and the death sentence had already been handed down. When the CP did take up the case, it neither denounced the political frame-up nor defended the Rosenbergs as victims of the capitalist state. The *Daily Worker* (6 April 1951) merely accused the government of "bad faith" similar to its refusal "to negotiate peace in Korea," where the U.S. imperialists and their allies were fighting a war against the North Korean and Chinese workers states.

In recent years, the American nuclear cowboys have raised a hue and cry over the efforts of North Korea to develop and test nuclear weapons and adequate delivery systems—capacity that Marxists support. The U.S. imperialists have also played up Iran's alleged nuclear program to impose withering sanctions to the detriment of its working masses and poor. In fact, possession of nuclear weapons is the only true measure of national sovereignty in today's world, as Saddam Hussein, who did not possess "weapons of mass destruction," learned the hard way.

The article we reprint below appeared in the *Militant* (29 June 1953) following the Rosenbergs' execution. It highlights how the anti-Communist trade-union bureaucracy, which sealed its hold on the labor movement through the red purges, was deaf to appeals on behalf of the Rosenbergs. Following in their footsteps, today's labor statesmen widely embrace the "war on terror," the latest crusade undertaken by the capitalist rulers after the fading of the "Red menace" with the 1991-92 counterrevolutionary destruction of the USSR. The vast expansion of the repressive powers of the state in the name of fighting terrorism is, as with the anti-Soviet McCarthyite frenzy, ultimately aimed at the working class, the potential gravediggers of the capitalist system. For more on the case, see "Hail the Heroic Rosenbergs!" (*WV* No. 923, 24 October 2008).

MILITANT
29 June 1953

The smell of the auto-da-fe—the burning of heretics—hangs over the land. With the legal murder on June 19 of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, the modern inquisition has sent its first two victims to the stake.

Their inquisitors kept the Rosenbergs on the wrack for weeks and months, offering the condemned couple their lives in return for "recantations" and "confessions." The Rosenbergs declared their innocence to the end. They refused to "abjure" themselves and spurned the role of stoolpigeons and perjurers as demanded by the Eisenhower administration, with its Department of Justice and FBI.

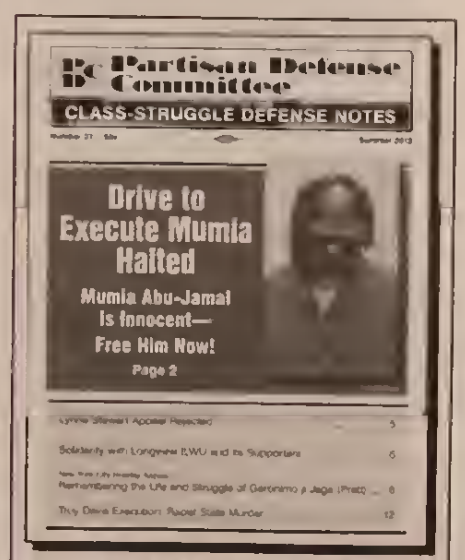
Enraged that their odious compact was refused, the witch hunters in obscene haste shoved aside a last-minute stay of execution granted by Justice Douglas and claimed their blood-victims.

The whole prestige and authority of the U.S. government was mobilized to give the odor of legal sanctity to the burnings. Eisenhower and the Supreme Court themselves, in effect, pulled the electric-

Burnt Offering

Laura Gray/Militant

Graphic illustrating sacrifice of Rosenbergs on altar of capitalism accompanied 29 June 1953 *Militant* article.



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chair switch. A cold-blooded six-to-three decision of the hastily reconvened Supreme Court vacated Justice Douglas' stay, granted the day before. A few hours later Eisenhower denied executive clemency, thus sealing the Rosenbergs' doom.

Eisenhower prated about the "fullest measure of justice and due process of law" allegedly extended the Rosenbergs. Only the most gullible really believe that. This was a political assassination. That is how virtually the entire world views it. This is shown by the wave of outrage and revulsion that has swept the globe at the sadistic haste with which the Rosenbergs were rushed to their death.

World-Wide Protest

The protests were most widespread and vocal precisely in those countries of Western Europe where American influence is reputed to be greatest. All sections of the French union movement—including the Catholic right—called for clemency to the Rosenbergs. All the Italian unions strongly voiced similar demands. Some of the leading conservative British trades unions, most notably the huge Transport and General Workers Union with 1,300,000 members, openly joined the protest movement.

In addition, the closest allies of the American capitalists—from the Pope himself to the president of France—warned against carrying through the execution because of the blow it would deal Washington's already shaky prestige among the masses of Western Europe.

Thousands among scientific, cultural, educational and religious circles here and abroad addressed appeals to Eisenhower for clemency. Some 2,800 Protestant clergymen in America voiced their opposition to the death penalty for the Rosenbergs. Eminent atomic scientists Dr. Albert Einstein and Dr. Harold C. Urey (who, incidentally, ridiculed the notion that the accused and the informer against them could have understood or conveyed atomic information) denounced the conviction of the Rosenbergs as well as their sentence.

But the one progressive force that might have prevented the murder of the Rosenbergs was shamefully silent. The 17,000,000-member American trade union movement uttered no word of protest or indignation at the witch-burning. With the notable exception of Hugo Ernst, head of the AFL Hotel and Restaurant Employees, not one leading American trade-union figure had the simple human decency and political intelligence to speak out against the political killing of the Rosenbergs.

It is inconceivable that the labor leaders did not know the tissue-paper flimsiness of the government's case against the Rosenbergs and the atmosphere of the anti-communist witch hunt that made a fair trial for them impossible. Yet they were too cowardly, too opportunist, too eager to demonstrate their subservience to the capitalist government and their own rabid anti-communism to demand justice and clemency for the Rosenbergs.

For their blind treachery they themselves may yet pay a terrible price at the hands of the witch hunters, whose ultimate objective is nothing less than the crushing of the American labor movement. The smell of the blood of the Rosenbergs will undoubtedly excite the appetites of the McCarthyites and embolden them to seek bigger and juicier prey—including and especially the trade-union leaders.

Why has the case of the Rosenbergs raised such an outcry everywhere that free opinion still finds room to express itself? Why do many who remained silent while U.S. imperialism burned alive several million Koreans or annihilated two whole Japanese cities with atom bombs now cry out at the spectacle of two obscure Americans being killed after what appear to be exhaustive legal proceedings?

Deaths in war seem impersonal and are frequently excused as the regrettable but unavoidable hazards of military struggle. But the Rosenberg case spotlights the nature of U.S. capitalism in all its brutality and vindictiveness. This was deliberate, premeditated murder intended to intimidate into silence all who would oppose American imperialism in any way. It is a symbol of all that the world has come to hate of the ruthless arrogance and aggressive drive of the American ruling class.

Their pretense that the Rosenbergs got all the benefits of the law makes the actions of Eisenhower and the Supreme Court seem all the more hypocritical. As Justice Black pointed out in his strong dissenting opinion, not only is "judicial haste...peculiarly out of place where the death penalty is imposed," but the Supreme Court "has never reviewed this record and has never affirmed the fairness of the trial..." Indeed, the court refused on a number of occasions to review the central question: Did the Rosenbergs get a fair trial?

Could a fair trial have been possible in the witch-hunt atmosphere and with the whole capitalist government lined up to burn the Rosenbergs, regardless of their guilt or innocence, to make of them a terrifying example?

The Eisenhower administration feared to wait any longer the test of public opinion. It feared that each day would see the protest and indignation grow, not only abroad but at home. The juridical case against the Rosenbergs was coming apart at the seams. It was becoming known that the Rosenbergs were actually charged not with committing espionage, but with mere "conspiracy"—agreement to commit—such acts. No tangible evidence was put forward even for this nebulous charge except the claims of a single informer who feared his own neck was at stake if he did not testify as demanded by the FBI. They rushed to kill the Rosenbergs precisely because the case could not stand up under further close public examination.

Gamma-Keystone

1953: Emergency mass protests were held around the world as Rosenbergs' execution date neared. Above: Paris, June 6. Below: Protesters headed for Washington, D.C., gather at NYC's Penn Station, June 18.

Bettmann

Act of Class Hate

This was a deed of class hate and class vengeance. The brutal American capitalist class has sadistically vented on the helpless bodies of the Rosenbergs its rage and frustration at the setbacks it has received abroad from the forces of the colonial and socialist revolutions and for the impediments raised by the revolutionary masses on all the continents to its schemes of world conquest.

The murder of the Rosenbergs shows how far the witch hunters are prepared to go to suppress free thought and political freedom in America. It is the extreme expression of a system of terrorism that has already put a gag over education, literature, the arts and sciences and public service that has sent hundreds to prison for their political views and cost thousands their jobs. It has placed shackles of fear on the American mind. And it will not be halted until the American labor movement—ultimate target of the witch hunters—stands forth with a mighty fist in the face of the witch hunters and declares: "Not another step!" ■

Paris...

(continued from page 3)

not only illusory but also suicidal.

The main obstacle to mobilizing the working class lies within it: the reformist leaderships dedicated to the maintenance of capitalism, from the union bureaucracies to the SP and PCF. They sow the illusion that all it takes is to pressure the SP to create some type of "republican front" to stop the fascists. In its leaflet passed out this evening in Paris, the NPA claimed that the answer is "unity against the far right." They voted for [former right-wing president Jacques] Chirac in 2002 under the same pretext. And now they are trying to save the "unity of the left" that has been damaged by the government's attacks, at a time of growing anger in the working class against these very attacks.

At bottom, Lutte Ouvrière has the same line of seeking unity with the SP leaders. At its fete last month, LO stated that the fascists' physical attacks must be repelled clubs in hand. But when the working class is mobilized, what is LO's policy? During the PSA auto strike in Aulnay, which they led from start to finish, they organized a stunt at the April 13 meeting of the SP's National Council: Jean-Pierre Mercier, leader of the striking CGT and an LO spokesman, begged the SP honchos in the government to stop betraying the workers and to change their economic policies. He stated that otherwise "we will all pay for it because it would leave the way wide open for the National Front. And that would be a real national catastrophe for the country, a real catastrophe for labor" (see *Le Bolchévik* No. 204).

It is urgent for the working class to mobilize en masse in the streets to smash the fascist scum. This requires an uncompromising struggle against the politics of the reformists, who deflect the proletariat from this task. We strive to forge a revolutionary leadership of the working class, a party like Lenin's Bolsheviks, who in 1917 led the working class in making a socialist revolution. For new October Revolutions! ■

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Manning...

(continued from page 12)

Meanwhile, the Commander-in-Chief prejudiced the trial by publicly announcing in advance that Manning was guilty. The court-martial opened amid outrage over new leaks exposing surveillance of journalists, ordinary citizens and foreign nationals by the Obama White House, which has ramped up assaults on civil liberties as part of the global "war on terror."

Manning is charged with 22 counts, including the capital offenses of "espionage" and "aiding the enemy." Although prosecutors say they are not seeking a death sentence, just entombment for life in a military brig, the judge could still impose that penalty. In a pretrial hearing earlier this year, Manning pled guilty to ten lesser charges that carry a penalty of up to 20 years' imprisonment. But the government has refused to negotiate, prosecuting him to the max in order to terrify others into silent submission. Contrast the prosecution of Bradley Manning, who has harmed no one, with that of Sergeant Robert Bales, who deliberately murdered 16 Afghan civilians last year, most of them women and children. The government has shown compassion for Bales, setting aside the death penalty and entertaining an exculpatory narrative of this killer's emotional problems. Bradley Manning faces the full force of state repression for exposing heinous actions by the likes of Bales.

The wording in the statute on "aiding the enemy" casts a very wide net that could snare anyone in the government's sights. It warns that anyone who "gives intelligence to or communicates or corresponds with or holds any intercourse with the enemy, either directly or indirectly" will "suffer death or such other punishment as a court-martial or military commission may direct." Who is the "enemy"? In the "war on terror," there is no declared enemy state, there are no defined battlefields, and this government knows no demilitarized zones.

In Bradley Manning's case, the government asserts that releasing significant activity war logs ("SigActs") from Afghanistan and Iraq constitutes aiding the enemy because the death raid on Osama bin Laden included capture of a laptop that had allegedly been used to access the WikiLeaks Web site. The London *Financial Times* (5 June) quotes a lawyer at the Government Accountability Project, who warned of the danger to everyone posed by Manning's prosecution: "Once the information is on the internet, everyone has access to it, including terrorists and serial killers and all sorts of unsavoury people. If the *FT* or *The New York Times* had been found at the bin Laden compound, would that mean the newspapers were also aiding the enemy?"

Certainly the videos and war logs leaked by Manning revealed no secrets to the peoples of Iraq and Afghanistan who were the direct victims of the U.S. military's bloody terror. It is the U.S. government itself, through its drone attacks on civilians, air strikes, butchery and subjugation of entire peoples and nations through imperialist occupations that fuels hatred of America worldwide. Moreover, today's terrorists were yesterday's freedom fighters for the U.S. government, which gave immense amounts of "material support" to Islamic reactionaries to kill Soviet Army soldiers in Afghanistan who stood on the side of women's rights and social progress in the 1980s.

Through the Looking Glass to Fort Meade

The court-martial of Bradley Manning has huge implications for everyone. At stake are the rights to read, write, associate and dissent, the right to a speedy and fair trial, not to mention the right not to be tortured. Yet the court-martial takes place far from adequate public scrutiny. Representatives of the Partisan Defense Committee and *Workers Vanguard* were among a total of 16 public spectators allowed in the tiny courtroom at Fort Meade (a few more squeezed in if staff or media seats were vacated). Hundreds of journalists were denied press credentials.

The trial was allegedly broadcast to a trailer seating a mere 35 more people, and to a 100-seat movie theater on the base. The Army's live feed, however, was the audiovisual equivalent of a redacted (blacked-out) Freedom of Information Act file. The sound and picture continually went dead. By coincidence or sick joke, the marquee in front of the theater announced the day's feature film: *Oblivion*. (We're not making this up.) The mere 70 credentialed media were assigned to a distant "pit" that also had an often broken live feed and where blogging, tweeting and broadcasting at will were *verboten*.

A pretense of transparency covered the secrecy, lending a surreal, topsy-turvy

Getty

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, holed up in Ecuadorian embassy in London, addressing supporters in August 2012.

quality to the proceedings. Heavily armed soldiers and poisonously saccharine public affairs officers acted as if they were earnestly serving the public's needs while in fact denying them. The military judge began the court-martial by soliciting reassurance from the prosecution that, yes indeed, everyone interested in attending the proceedings was accommodated—a blatant lie.

The stalwarts who lined up under heavy guard for hours before the start of the trial each day to snag a coveted courtroom seat were subjected to vehicle inspections and ID checks, frisked, wanded and made to jump daily wardrobe hurdles. Manning's supporters wore black T-shirts with the word "truth" in blazing white letters. Day one of the court-martial, the decision came down that the word "truth" could not be worn in the courtroom. As the bailiff said, "No attire that detracts from the dignity of these proceedings" would be allowed. So people wore their shirts inside out to conceal the "truth." But on day two, a smiling soldier gripping an automatic weapon told them: "Y'all can wear your shirts right side out today guys. Isn't that great?"

In the courtroom, Bradley Manning was kept as isolated as possible from his supporters. He was forbidden even to make eye contact or turn his head to observe those who had traveled from around the country to show their solidarity with him. Military police flanked the divider between the defense table and the public seating, facing down Bradley Manning's supporters, allegedly for his protection.

WV Photo

Daniel Ellsberg speaking at June 1 Fort Meade protest. Ellsberg's 1971 release of "Pentagon Papers" shed light on U.S. war in Vietnam.

Lifting the Veil

A big factor in the Bradley Manning court-martial is the government's zeal to prosecute WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, still holed up in the Ecuadorian embassy in London to avoid extradition to the U.S. via Sweden. Vice President Joseph Biden declared Assange a "high-tech terrorist," i.e., a man with no rights and a target on his back. The hundreds of thousands of documents released by Manning and published on WikiLeaks have helped expose the everyday workings of the capitalist imperialist system. In addition to the Iraq and Afghanistan war logs, diplomatic cables reveal that the U.S. compelled the Haitian government to exempt American manufacturers from raising the starvation wages of Haitian labor from 22 cents to 61 cents per hour, advised the Israelis on how to tamp down an international scandal over conditions for Palestinians in Gaza, among other acts of imperialist statesmanship.

Most spectacularly, in April 2010 WikiLeaks published a video under the title "Collateral Murder" showing the July 2007 airstrike, amid laughter and blood lust, by U.S. servicemen in Apache helicopters against civilians in Baghdad. They killed 12 people in this airstrike, including two Reuters employees, and wounded young children. The U.S. had repeatedly thwarted attempts by Reuters to obtain the video footage through the Freedom of Information Act. After determining that the video was already in public hands (David Finkel's book *The Good Soldiers* included a verbatim transcript from the video), Manning sent it to WikiLeaks.

At the court-martial, the prosecution tied itself in a knot of contradictions. It asserted that Manning was taking direct orders from Assange, selectively gathering information from a WikiLeaks "want list" of documents, while simultaneously arguing that Manning harvested a thousand cables per hour from the Internet—hardly a selective search. In a pretrial statement to the court, Manning said that he submitted documents to WikiLeaks only after the public editor for the *New York Times* failed to answer his repeated messages regarding important information about Iraq and Afghanistan and the *Washington Post* told him essentially that they could not care less.

Manning made an online submission of the Apache video to WikiLeaks with an attached text explaining that "this is possibly one of the more significant documents of our time removing the fog of war and revealing the true nature of twenty-first century asymmetric warfare. Have a good day." Manning told the court: "I felt I had accomplished something that allowed me to have a clear conscience based upon what I had seen and read about and knew were happening in both Iraq and Afghanistan everyday."

The problem for the Army is that Bradley Manning has a moral and political conscience. He enlisted because he naively believed Army propaganda about defending freedom and democracy and inscribed the word "humanist" on the back of his dog tags. When he discovered that the star-spangled pretense to freedom was used to cloak systematic torture, repression and killing, he used his considerable computer skills to expose the truth.

Under skillful cross-examination by Manning's defense attorney, David Coombs, prosecution witnesses were compelled to acknowledge that Manning was simply the best, most competent analyst among all the soldiers assigned to intelligence at Forward Operating Base Hammer in Iraq, their "go to" guy whenever competent, well-researched and clearly mapped information was required. Witnesses acknowledged that Internet surfing and downloading were a widespread practice at the base and even encouraged for professional development. Contrary to prosecution allegations of "espionage," cyber forensics specialists were compelled to admit under cross-examination that Manning's computers showed no evidence of direct or indirect contact or financial transactions with foreign powers or "enemy" forces and no evidence that he intended to bring harm to U.S. troops or anyone else.

This was confirmed on day two of the court-martial with the testimony of Adrian Lamo, a computer hacker and convicted felon who had allowed Manning to confide in him and then turned him over to the Feds to secure his own advantage with prosecutors. Lamo acknowledged under cross-examination that Manning was not interested in making money by selling secrets to Russia or China. Indeed, the government possesses the entirety of the Internet chats between Lamo and Manning that prove Manning's innocence of the most serious charges.

Manning sought nothing except to spark a debate in the American public to stop the monstrosities. His messages to Lamo, quoted in Chase Madar's book *The Passion of Bradley Manning* (Verso, 2013), included:

> "I think I've been traumatized too much by reality, to care about consequences of shattering the fantasy.
> "I want people to see the truth...regardless of who they are...because without information, you cannot make informed decisions as a public."

Imperialist System in Advanced Decay

Lifting the veil on the U.S. war machine was a gutsy act of conscience that objectively helps the victims and opponents of the imperialist system. But the workings of this society will not change by making more information publicly available. In that sense, Julian Assange and WikiLeaks activists are hardly radicals. They are defiant liberals with a mastery of Internet communications.

At the right end of the spectrum of Bradley Manning supporters are reform-minded individuals who oppose his persecution because they want to morally rearm the imperialist colossus in order to make it more effective. We stand on the other side, fighting for the class interests of the working people internationally. We appreciate what Bradley Manning, Julian Assange and others, including, now, Edward Snowden, have done because the working class needs to be educated as to the systematic workings of the state run by and for the capitalist class.

As Marxists, we understand that imperialist occupations and wars are inextricably part of the system of capitalist exploitation and not the result of misguided policies. This system is based on the exploitation of labor for private profit, buttressed by systematic racial segre-

New Address for Tinley Park Activist

In "Free Tinley Park Anti-Fascists!" (*WV* No. 1023, 3 May), we urged readers to send letters of solidarity to the five anti-racist militants who have been imprisoned for breaking up a gathering of fascists outside Chicago. Please note that the address of John Tucker has changed to: M34024, P.O. Box 549, Lincoln, IL 62656.

gation and oppression that divides the working people. The American government, which pretends it is "by and for the people," is the executive committee of the capitalist class, whose rule is maintained through the force and violence of special bodies of armed men—the police, military and prisons. Opponents of this system must be won to an understanding that it will take a series of socialist revolutions around the world to overturn the capitalist order and establish socialist egalitarianism through internationally planned and collectivized economies.

To this end, the U.S. proletariat must take a side in defense of the peoples oppressed by the American rulers. In opposing the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan, we stated that every blow struck against imperialist forces was in the objective interests of the international working class and called for class struggle against the U.S. rulers at home. At the same time, as is evident from the intercommunal slaughter in Iraq and the nightmarish oppression of women in Afghanistan, bourgeois nationalists and Islamic fundamentalists are implacable enemies of the toilers of their own countries. Throughout the neocolonial world, the emancipation of the exploited and the oppressed will require uniting the proletariat in struggle for its own class rule, linked to the fight for socialist revolution in the imperialist centers.

What a Tangled Web They Weave

At a panel discussion of Bradley Manning supporters in Washington, D.C., on the eve of the court-martial, Peter Van Buren, a 24-year State Department official who was sacked for putting a link to a WikiLeaks posting on his personal blog, described the lunacy about leaks in the Obama administration. Firewalls on State Department computers block employees from looking at WikiLeaks or even BBC or CNN reports that mention WikiLeaks postings of State Department cables that are accessible on the State Department's own computers (not to mention on smart phones or personal computers). Van Buren dissected the purpose of the madness in a blog post (27 September 2011) about his firing: "DS [Bureau of Diplomatic Security] monitoring my blog is like a small-town cop pulling over every African-American driver: vindictive, selective prosecution."

Van Buren, who worked at the same base in Iraq as Manning, told the discussion that the question he asks himself now is why didn't he leak the cables himself. Van Buren proudly turned up for his last day of work at the State Department in a Bradley Manning T-shirt. To his surprise, many co-workers had their pictures taken with him.

Government secrecy is spreading faster than bubonic plague as a result of the race to erect a vast security state after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. The WikiLeaks haul is but a tiny portion of the towering mountain range of classified government documents. The number of such documents is itself a state secret, but it is estimated that in 2010 the U.S. was producing an annual avalanche of 560 million pages labeled classified information. Simply to shuffle so much material requires a huge increase in security clearances. A *Washington Post* study in 2010 concluded that over 854,000 people—more than one and a half times the population of Washington, D.C.—held top-secret security clearances.

Obama has charged more people under the 1917 Espionage Act for releasing information to the public than all prior administrations combined. Daniel Ellsberg, a military analyst who famously released the Pentagon Papers during the Vietnam War, which shed light on the U.S. war in Indochina, was the first person prosecuted under the Espionage Act for releasing classified information to the public. An outspoken and tireless advocate for Bradley Manning, Ellsberg remarked: "I'm sure that President Obama would have sought a life sentence in my case" (*Washington Post*, 5 June).

The Espionage Act was one of an array of repressive measures adopted after U.S. imperialism's entry into World War I to criminalize antiwar activity. It mandated imprisonment for any act deemed to interfere with recruitment of troops. Socialist Party leader Eugene V. Debs was imprisoned under the Espionage Act and stripped of his citizenship for speaking against the war. Spooked by the Bolshevik Revolution, as well as by domestic unrest and anarchist agitation, in 1918 Congress passed the Sedition Act as amendments to the Espionage Act, making it a crime to criticize the "U.S. form of government."

Ellsberg's 1971 prosecution took place in the context of convulsive social struggles that wrested gains in this country, especially the civil rights and Black Power movements. Most importantly, the losing U.S. war in Vietnam was changing the political climate and relationship of forces. The fact that America was getting its ass kicked engendered a defeatist wing of the bourgeoisie, which was willing to cut U.S. losses in Vietnam following the destruction of the Indonesian Communist Party—then the largest such party in the capitalist world—in a 1965 coup and subsequent bloodbath encouraged by Washington. Liberals like those who run the *New York Times*, which printed the Pentagon Papers leaked by Ellsberg, thought the U.S. should "bring the boys home." The Vietnamese workers and peasants were soon successful in driving out the militarily and economically mightier U.S. imperialists.

As Marxists in the belly of the beast, "our boys" were the North Vietnamese and the South Vietnamese National Liberation Front (NLF) fighters, who were fighting for social revolution. In the context of a draft army, our comrades accepted conscription with their working-class brothers and fought for soldiers' civil liberties and to win servicemen to the revolutionary internationalist understanding that the enemy was U.S. imperialism, not the NLF. Soldiers whose views the Spartacist League supported issued the *G.I. Voice* newsletter, which demanded the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all American troops from Vietnam and other occupied countries, an end to racism in the armed forces and an end to deployment of GIs against strikes and political protest at home. Advice to inductees in the very first issue of *G.I. Voice* (February 1969) resonates in the Bradley Manning case today: "Our position is that while we are in the Army we must obey all legal orders. At the same time, we are citizens and do not give up our Constitutional rights because we put on a uniform."

Doan Cong Tinh

1970: North Vietnamese radio operator during battle with U.S. imperialists' South Vietnamese puppet forces in Quang Tri. Defeat of U.S. in Vietnam was victory for world's toilers.

There is no conscription today and we do not volunteer to serve for U.S. imperialism. We recognize, however, that the armed forces include many thousands of working-class and minority men and women who end up there because this capitalist society offers them no jobs or affordable education. Their disaffection with the military is expressed in statistics of desperation. Suicide is now the leading cause of death among active duty troops, including those in combat.

Outside the court-martial, Afghanistan war vet Jacob George spoke with *WV* about the impact Bradley Manning's actions had on him and other veterans. He and other mostly Southern vets launched ARTTE (A Ride to the End). They bicycle around the country to play bluegrass and folk music, speaking out against the war. He said people "would listen to the music but they weren't too awesomely impressed about the message. Nor was the media willing to give it much coverage. When the Afghan War Logs were released later on in 2010, *overnight* the national discourse and the public attitude about the war in Afghanistan shifted. All of a sudden, people wanted to hear what we had to say." He continued, "I definitely saw a shift after Manning released that information, and it also contributed to my healing, because as a veteran it gave me a voice."

American "Democracy": Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie

With his silver-tongued double-speak about "justice" and "freedom," Obama, who was vaulted into office with the overt or backhanded support of the reformist left, has enhanced the repressive state machinery inherited from George W. Bush and put his own stamp on the global "war on terror." The administration's Tuesday power breakfasts draw up kill lists for targeted assassinations and drone attacks, like the one in September 2011 that killed U.S. citizen Anwar al-Awlaki in Yemen. And Obama is largely given a free hand to do so by Democratic Party-loyal liberals, black elected officials and labor misleaders. Obama stands in a long tradition of Democratic presidents who shredded civil liberties at home while escalating American military intervention around the world.

The "progressive" Woodrow Wilson—an ardent segregationist—led the U.S. into World War I. Establishing the League of Nations (predecessor to the United Nations), which Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin called "a den of thieves," Wilson blathered that "diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view." Meanwhile, his Espionage Act and Sedition Act gave the government wide latitude for censorship. He also signed an executive order requiring all public employees to "support government policy: both in conduct and in sympathy."

Franklin Delano Roosevelt was at the helm of U.S. imperialism in World War II. FDR established the classification of government information in the modern era and expanded the definition of military installations to include any commercial manufacture of munitions or equipment for the Army or Navy, thus ratcheting up repression of labor in the burgeoning defense industries. Under FDR, people of Japanese descent were defined as "an enemy race," and Roosevelt had everyone fitting that description removed to internment camps. In August 1945, knowing that Japan was ready to surrender, Roosevelt's Democratic successor, Harry S. Truman, dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, annihilating the civilian population. With Executive Order 9835, Truman established the Federal Employee Loyalty Program to investigate and deny employment where "there is a reasonable doubt as to the loyalty of the person involved."

As Leon Trotsky, co-leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution alongside Lenin, observed, "Imperialism with its dark plans of conquest and its robber alliances and deals, developed the system of secret diplomacy to the highest level." It took a bourgeois social revolution, the great French Revolution of 1789, to establish the *Archives Nationales* for the express purpose of enabling the people to keep an eye on the government. When the workers came to power in Russia, one of their first orders of business was to open the files of the former capitalist government and publicize the truth behind its lies and diplomatic secrets to the workers of the world. It will take a proletarian socialist revolution in America to get the whole truth about U.S. imperialism's global and domestic machinations and put an end to the exploitation and racist oppression of capitalist class rule. The Spartacist League is dedicated to building the Marxist revolutionary workers party necessary to achieve this purpose. ■

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SF Pride...

(continued from page 12)

right wing SF Pride has become since its founding over 40 years ago. One longtime activist denounced the Board's act as "a slap in the face to everything that Pride once stood for." He pointed out that after the 1969 Stonewall rebellion that sparked the gay rights movement, gay activists, as part of the broader New Left, called to end the Vietnam War and to free the Black Panthers. Speakers attributed the Board's repudiation of Manning to pressure from corporations who fund the event and to gay vets and members of the military. On June 7, the Board announced in a press release that speakers at the open forum had failed to sway them. Bradley Manning is out as grand marshal.

WV Photo

May 31: Activists at open forum denounce SF Pride Board for overturning decision appointing Bradley Manning honorary grand marshal for 2013 Gay Pride parade.

Gay Rights and the Democratic Party Machine

Radical nostalgia aside, the bourgeois political line of SF Gay Pride is no new thing. While always marked by liberal lifestylist politics, the gay rights movement as a whole turned sharply right during the last 30 years along with the national ascent of "family values" and American chauvinism, a period of renewed attacks on workers, the poor and the oppressed and the erosion of civil liberties. Gay rights came to mean the right to marry and the right to serve in the military—two goals the old radicals would have disdained.

The San Francisco Democratic establishment learned decades ago how to manipulate the rhetoric of "gay power" to bolster its rule, and Gay Pride Day has become an institutionalized representation of this face of city government. The co-optation of the rhetoric of gay rights into the fabric of Democratic Party political life dates back to Harvey Milk, the city's first openly gay Supervisor and the first to march on Gay Pride Day.

After right-wing bigot Dan White murdered Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Milk in 1978, the city machine seized on the issue for political capital. One of the first acts of Mayor Dianne Feinstein was to mandate the recruitment of gays into the police force. For years, dozens of gay police have headed up the parade with its "diversity" contingent of cops, squad cars and paddy wagons. These are the same cops who harass, beat up and arrest homeless people, sex workers and political protesters on the orders of Democratic Party mayors and the Democratic Party-dominated Board of Supervisors. But liberal activists do not protest the dominant presence of the police—the armed enforcers of racist capitalist rule—because what is valued by the gay lifestylist agenda is the cops' sexual identity.

In San Francisco, "gay rights" rhetoric helps corral votes and support to the liberal-chic face of City Hall. Thus former mayor Gavin Newsom sought to bring his left-liberal opponents solidly into his camp by championing gay marriage. The status quo in the city today shows that Harvey Milk's strategy of lifestyle liberation has succeeded in a limited way. He wanted being openly gay to be openly accepted in San Francisco politics. Indeed, as gay marriage rights are inching toward reality in state legislatures across the country, more gay faces are appearing in high places.

But even as more gays are prominent in bourgeois politics, anti-gay bigotry is exploding on the streets. Just last month Mark Carson, a 32-year-old gay black man, was shot in the face at pointblank range in New York's Greenwich Village, widely considered one of the bubbles of safety for gay people. The assailant taunted him with anti-gay slurs before pulling the trigger. This is no aberration. On June 4, the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs released its 2012 report documenting the level of violence against gays. Along with thousands of assaults, the coalition also documents a ***reported*** total of 25 anti-gay homicides in the U.S. last year. The year before had the highest total of documented killings: 30. The actual numbers are undoubtedly higher.

Oppression Rooted in Class Society

To struggle effectively against the persecution of gays and others who fall outside of the heterosexual "norm," it is necessary to start with the understanding that democratic rights in capitalist society are partial, fragile and reversible. As fighters for the socialist liberation of humanity, we are committed to full democratic rights for gays, lesbians and transgenders, and we support any legal advances that can be wrested from the rulers of this cruelly bigoted society. This includes the right to serve in the military. At the same time, as Marxists we give not one iota of support to U.S. imperialism, the world's biggest terrorist force.

We support the right of gay people to marry and divorce, but we do not advocate or prettify the institution of marriage. We fight for a society in which no one needs to be forced into a legal straitjacket in order to get medical benefits, visitation rights, custody of children, inheritance, immigration rights or any of the privileges capitalist society grants to those who are embedded in the traditional "one man on one woman for life" marital mold. The Spartacist League vehemently opposes any government intrusion into consensual sexual activity and private life. Government out of the bedrooms!

But there is nothing inherently revolutionary about an unconventional lifestyle. The act of "coming out" may defy, but cannot eradicate, class-rooted repressive institutions. The oppression of homosexuals, like the oppression of women, serves as an index of more general social and political attitudes. As the basic institution defining sexual relations, the family, together with organized religion, mandates patriarchal social relations and generalized anti-gay oppression. The family—the main source of the oppression of women in class society—is necessary to the capitalist system of exploitation. It regiments and teaches respect for authority to each new generation of wage slaves and cannon fodder.

Harvey Milk thought that American capitalism was just fine. In that sense, today's SF Pride Board follows in his footsteps. They're at peace with bloody U.S. imperialism, too. Acceptance of the capitalist order, whether captained by Democrats or Republicans, is antithetical to any genuine fight for the liberation of black people, gays or any of the oppressed.

As the SYC speaker stressed at the May 31 Gay Pride forum:

> "It is going to take a working-class revolution to bury the American imperialist beast once and for all, and to ensure the complete liberation of women, black people, gays and lesbians, all the oppressed. For this to be successful, the world needs to know the truth about the systematic violence and lies that prop up capitalist rule. And Bradley Manning helped get the truth out. Free Bradley Manning!" ■

Surveillance...

(continued from page 2)

information about Awlaki to the Department of Justice months before Awlaki was killed, and briefed the Congress before this strike as well." Dating back to 13th-century English common law, due process signifies that one cannot be deprived of life or liberty without notice of the charges and an opportunity to defend oneself in a court of law. For the former constitutional law professor Obama, due process now means merely consulting other members of the administration before terminating or locking up anyone deemed an enemy of U.S. interests anywhere in the world.

Obama has repeatedly promised to make his administration more "transparent" while pulling the shroud tighter over the government's deadly machinations in a way that would make Richard Nixon turn green with envy. Similarly, in his May 23 speech, the president pronounced that "journalists should not be at legal risk for doing their jobs," even as he and his hatchet man Eric Holder were pursuing a vendetta against the media for (at times) unearthing and reporting things the White House finds uncomfortable. In the case of government employees who supply the information, it has been a full-scale assault.

The trigger for the seizure of the AP phone records was a 2012 article about a foiled terror plot that disclosed leaked information about CIA activity—specifically, a CIA-Saudi-British operation that planted a mole inside Al Qaeda's Yemen affiliate. The mole had volunteered to blow up an airliner using a new bomb designed to circumvent airport security, which he then turned over to his CIA handlers. AP honored the CIA/White House request to hold the story for days in order to facilitate the assassination of a top Al Qaeda official using information obtained from the mole. Among the AP journalists involved in the Yemen article were Adam Goldman and Matt Apuzzo, who won a Pulitzer Prize last year for exposing the NYPD's surveillance of American Muslim communities.

For lifting a bit of the veil of secrecy and lies with which the imperialist rulers cover their depredations, Army Private Bradley Manning is now undergoing a court-martial with the possibility of life imprisonment (see article on page 12). The Obama administration drips venom for WikiLeaks, which posted online the war logs and diplomatic cables made available by Manning. James Goodale, general counsel of the *New York Times* in its clashes with the Nixon administration, pointed out: "The biggest challenge to the press today is the threatened prosecution of WikiLeaks, and it's absolutely frightening."

Goodale's former client, like the rest of the bourgeois media, is quite content to throw WikiLeaks head Julian Assange to the wolves. Although the *Times* & Co. bridle when the government steps on their toes, their role is not to expose the capitalist rulers but to be their mouthpieces. It was the *Times* that played an instrumental role in peddling the lies that Iraq possessed "weapons of mass destruction," a pretext for the U.S. invasion in 2003. When Mark Klein fought to expose the NSA/AT&T collaboration, the paper turned him away and sat on the story for months, just as it had refused to report the NSA's warrantless wiretapping for over a year at the Bush administration's request. In *The ABC of Communism* (1920), Nikolai Bukharin aptly described the role of the bourgeois press as auxiliaries to the armed bodies of men that make up the state, acting together with the schools and churches as "specialists to stupefy and subdue the proletariat."

The Fraud of Bourgeois Democracy

As Bolshevik leader V. I. Lenin wrote in his 1918 work *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*: "Bourgeois democracy, although a great historical advance in comparison with medievalism, always remains, and under capitalism is bound to remain, restricted, truncated, false and hypocritical, a paradise for the rich and a snare and deception for the exploited, for the poor." Among the "snares and deceptions" perfected in the U.S. is the vaunted "separation of powers" between the executive, legislative and judiciary branches of government. While this setup purports to maintain "checks and balances" on the power of any single branch, the White House gave the game away in responding to the disclosure of the Verizon data tapping. As described by an administration official: "All three branches of government are involved in reviewing and authorizing intelligence collection under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. Congress passed that act and is regularly and fully briefed on how it is used, and the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court authorizes such collection." In the first 30 years of its existence, that secret court approved all but a handful of the tens of thousands of intercept requests by the government.

With Congress having written the White House a blank check to wage war on democratic rights and civil liberties, some lawmakers are belatedly and disingenuously professing dismay at the scope of the snooping. Among them is Republican Congressman Jim Sensenbrenner, an author of the Patriot Act, who now pleads, "I do not believe the broadly drafted FISA order is consistent with the requirements of the Patriot Act. Seizing phone records of millions of innocent people is excessive and un-American."

Such measures were precisely the purpose of the Patriot Act, which expanded the government's authority to monitor anyone it claims is involved in international "terrorism." Under its Section 215, the FBI has served tens of thousands of "national security letters" to libraries, phone companies and other businesses demanding records. The same section sanctions the seizure of journalists' phone records. The repeated renewal and expansion of the law, including with the 2008 FISA Amendments Act, has made it even easier for the government to obtain authorization for electronic surveillance and interception.

The ultimate target of the police and spying apparatus is the working class, whose role in producing the wealth of this society gives it the social power to choke off profits, the lifeblood of the capitalist system. At the turn of the 20th century, the Russian tsars propped up their decrepit rule by unleashing an army of agents provocateurs and Okhrana (secret police) against that country's small but rapidly growing proletariat and the Marxist circles that sprouted up at the time. This was the hallmark of a dying ruling class. In October 1917, the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky led the Russian proletariat to power, overthrowing capitalist rule on one-sixth of the globe. The bourgeoisie to this day sees it as a calamity whose repetition must be prevented at all costs, while we Marxists see in that revolution a model for the proletariat of the world. It is our purpose to forge a world party of socialist revolution to lead the workers in overthrowing capitalist class rule and putting an end to its repression and imperialist ravages once and for all. ■

NDP...

(continued from page 4)

In a socialist society, production will be organized for human need, not the profit of a tiny layer of exploiters. Getting there requires the overthrow of those exploiters through working-class socialist revolution; the smashing of the repressive capitalist state machine and its replacement by a workers state; the expropriation of the capitalist class and an internationalist struggle to extend the revolutionary gains to working people across the globe. Such are the prerequisites of an egalitarian communist society, in which the state has withered away and economic scarcity and class divisions have been transcended. For this we need a new leadership of the working class and oppressed, dedicated to the principle that those who labour must rule.

B.C. NDP to Workers: Lower Your Expectations

The recent B.C. [British Columbia] election was a case study in the political character of the NDP as well as its left hangers-on. With the ruling Liberal Party widely predicted to lose, major capitalist corporations like Enbridge and Telus were hedging their bets, giving money to the NDP as well as their usual Liberal favourites. But it was not to be, as the Liberals campaigned aggressively and emerged with a majority government.

The New Democrats' campaign pledge of "fiscal responsibility" was, even for them, very right-wing. In response to a leaked internal policy document, they hotly denied any intention of implementing such social necessities as universal public childcare, or an end to health care premiums and tuition fees for higher education. B.C. Federation of Labour president Jim Sinclair, himself an NDP supporter, observed that the party had "made no commitments at all" to labour. Noting the similarity of the NDP and Liberal platforms, *Vancouver Sun* columnist Vaughn Palmer quipped, "those with anything but minimal expectations should prepare to be disappointed." Certainly the NDP merited not a shred of support from the working class.

This was not, of course, the conclusion drawn by the NDP-loyal reformist left. Pride of place here goes to the International Socialists (I.S.), whose pre-election statement was laughably entitled "BC NDP Platform: Really Good, but Not as Good as it Could Be" (*Socialist Worker*, May 2013). Without even a mention of socialism, this analysis, seemingly ghostwritten by a Keynesian tax accountant, salutes a long list of NDP-proposed taxes and portrays this as "a blow against the prevailing myths of austerity."

The NDP's stints in office in B.C. show with particular clarity how it rules for the bosses: from mass strikebreaking in the 1970s to a string of attacks on labour and oppressed minorities during the party's 1991-2001 reign. Teachers, who face a possible upcoming strike, might recall the 2000 strike by school support workers, which the NDP broke after just a week. The New Democrats also legislated an end to a teachers strike in 1993 and blocked another through anti-strike legislation in 1996. And in 1995, the NDP government ordered what was then the largest RCMP operation in Canadian history to drive Native protesters off a patch of ranch land at Gustafsen Lake.

Spartacist Canada

Toronto, June 2012: Trotskyist League at rally in solidarity with Quebec student strike.

"National Unity" Chauvinism

The New Democrats' 2011 federal breakthrough largely came through their huge growth in seats in Quebec. At the time, the I.S. declared that the NDP now "unites workers and their struggles in Quebec and Canada," while Fightback claimed that the result signaled Quebec workers' "rejection of the old sterile federalist-nationalist debate." As we noted:

> "Such claims that the working class is now united under Layton's NDP and that the Quebec national question is passé are utterly bogus. The NDP has always been an Anglo-chauvinist opponent of the national rights of the Québécois, and thus of any prospect of united working-class struggle against Canadian capitalism. The election has changed none of this."
>
> —"NDP 'Surge': Dead End for Workers," *Spartacist Canada* No. 169 (Summer 2011)

The continued existence of an artificial "united Canada," where one nation dominates the other and inflames national animosities, has long undermined the prospect of united working-class struggle against capitalism. In English Canada, Maple Leaf patriotism pushed by the NDP and labour tops binds the workers to the interests of their own exploiters. At the same time, the labour misleaders in Quebec push workers to support "their" capitalists via the Parti and Bloc Québécois. We Trotskyists advocate Quebec independence in order to remove this source of division among the workers and bring to the fore the need for them to oppose the capitalist exploiters of each nation, not each other.

The NDP's hostility to Quebec's national rights was shown again in its recent vote against a Bloc Québécois motion to overturn the Clarity Act. This reactionary law, which the NDP has long supported, effectively bans Quebec's democratic right to self-determination, i.e., to independence. Its repeal would have been a straightforward democratic measure.

To counter the Bloc motion, the NDP cooked up its own "Unity Bill" which would, like the Clarity Act, give the federal government the right to dictate what question could be asked in a future Quebec referendum. Even this was too much for B.C. NDP leader Adrian Dix: chiding the federal party from a standpoint of consistent national chauvinism, he upheld the Clarity Act in toto. This is a perfect example of how the NDP accommodates the anti-Quebec chauvinism that is particularly strong in Western Canada. Another NDP candidate in B.C., one Dayleen Van Ryswyk, went a bit too far for the party brass, who dropped her following the revelation of her bigoted online rants against Native people and "having french [sic] stuffed down my throat."

For a Revolutionary Workers Party!

The future evolution of the NDP remains uncertain—whether it remains a pro-capitalist labour party that utilizes its direct ties to the unions to help contain and defeat struggle, or whether it severs such ties and becomes a party more like the U.S. Democrats. Regardless, the task of Marxist revolutionaries is manifestly not to build the NDP or pretend it can institute a "socialist program." It is rather to work to break the workers, starting with the most advanced, from the politics of pro-capitalist social democracy.

What is needed today to fight against the massacre of jobs and social services is a mobilization of the working class in a fight for jobs for all through a shorter workweek with no loss in pay. A massive organizing drive must be launched to draw into the unions all of the working class, especially its minority and immigrant components. In the course of such struggles, increasing layers of the working class will come to see the need for an assault on the entire capitalist system.

The only way to end once and for all the vicious assaults on social programs, to win jobs, decent living standards, free quality medical care, childcare and decent pensions for everyone is by ripping the productive forces from the hands of the capitalist class through socialist revolution and putting them in the hands of those whose labour makes society run. The NDP's hold over the working class is a major obstacle to forging the class consciousness necessary to such struggle.

We need a revolutionary workers party that is at once binational, multiracial and internationalist. The purpose of the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste is to build the nucleus of such a party, which would champion the cause of all those oppressed and exploited under capitalism. It would give conscious leadership to the struggles of workers not only to improve present conditions but to do away with the entire system of exploitation and wage slavery. ■

Guatemala...

(continued from page 5)

with which the United States has watched the growth of the Communists' influence to the point where, at least to the outsider, they seem to be masters of the country in all but name." As the CIA worked to oust Arbenz from within, a ragtag army of a few hundred was organized in Honduras under the exiled Carlos Castillo Armas, who had received training at Fort Leavenworth.

Key to the invasion's success was the bombing and strafing of Guatemala City by U.S. airplanes flown by U.S. pilots. CIA honcho Howard Hunt (later of Watergate infamy) described the mission in the CNN documentary series *Cold War*: "What we wanted to do was have a terror campaign, to terrify Arbenz particularly, terrify his troops." Abandoned by his army, Arbenz resigned, ceding power to Colonel Carlos Enrique Díaz. Ambassador Peurifoy presented Díaz with a list of alleged Communists to be killed. Díaz, however, intended to release all political prisoners, including PGT members. So Peurifoy ordered the bombing to continue, Díaz was removed from office at gunpoint and a U.S. embassy plane flew in with Guatemala's new leader, Castillo Armas. Waves of bloody repression duly ensued. PGT members and peasant and labor leaders were rounded up, incarcerated or executed, while land was returned to United Fruit and domestic oligarchs. Three years later, Castillo Armas was shot dead, one of a series of "regime changes" that would become commonplace in Guatemala.

Bettmann

Ríos Montt with imperialist sponsor Ronald Reagan in Honduras, December 1983.

U.S. imperialism's labor lieutenants were active in anti-Communist intrigues in Guatemala. American Federation of Labor operatives undermined PGT influence in the unions and recruited right-wing unionists for the invasion force. Guatemala was in fact a training ground for the role that the AFL-CIO bureaucracy would play in Central and South America through its notorious American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD), which worked with the CIA to destroy militant, left-led unions. The "AFL-CIA" can take some credit for the fact that, as of July 2009, the International Trade Union Confederation found that Guatemala was the second most dangerous country in Latin America for trade unionists.

Imperialism and the Class Struggle

Ríos Montt is a psychopathic mass murderer. Justice would require a trial by workers and peasants who survived his rule. It is simply nauseating to observe the feigned shock at the atrocities of their puppets on the part of the U.S. rulers, who continue to spawn and back the likes of President Pérez Molina. No matter which capitalist party is in power at any given time in Washington, grisly repression is a fundamental feature of U.S. imperialism. Tentacles of the octopus (as United Fruit was known throughout Central America) can be cut off, as the Cuban Revolution did, but Yankee imperialism will continue to strangle the hemisphere until it is struck in the heart.

The genocide trial provided a stark view of the barbarity that the imperialists and their local henchmen inflict on working people in semicolonial countries. But exposure will not suffice to eliminate this system of oppression. It is up to the U.S. working class to smash the American capitalist-imperialist system from within and come to the aid of their class brothers and sisters in Mexico and further south, fighting to throw off their own shackles.

The labor movement north of the Rio Grande/Río Bravo is enriched by immigrant workers from El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and elsewhere who bring to the U.S. proletariat direct experience of the murderous repression and brutal exploitation enforced by the likes of Ríos Montt on behalf of the U.S. capitalist rulers. Only when the working class, led by its internationalist vanguard party, takes power through a socialist revolution, expropriating the expropriators and destroying their state machinery root and branch, will justice be served on such hit men and their imperialist paymasters. We in the Spartacist League, U.S. section of the International Communist League, are dedicated to the task of forging such a party in the belly of the imperialist beast. ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

Exposed U.S. Atrocities and Lies

Truth-Teller on Trial: Free Bradley Manning!

AP

WV Photo

Left: Bradley Manning escorted out of courthouse in Fort Meade, Maryland, June 4. Right: Rally at Fort Meade in support of Manning on June 1, two days before start of court-martial.

FORT MEADE—On June 3, the court-martial of Bradley Manning, an army intelligence analyst who released classified information in order to expose the barbarism of U.S. military occupation and domination in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere, finally began. In more than three years of pretrial detention aimed at destroying the mind, body and soul of this whistleblower, Manning was held in torturous conditions of solitary confinement, deprived of sleep, clothing and even his eyeglasses, while being taunted and poked at continually by sadistic guards. Yet Manning courageously held fast to his political purpose: to expose evidence of monstrous war crimes and everyday U.S. overlordship of Third World countries.

On Saturday, June 1, some 1,000 supporters rallied in blistering heat outside the Fort Meade Army base near Washington, D.C., to demand freedom for Bradley Manning. Police blocked roads leading to the protest to obstruct people from joining or seeing the rally and march. Print, radio and television journalists from a large number of countries covered the protest, but the only mainstream American media present was the right-wing Fox News. The conspicuous absence of the U.S. capitalist press was consistent with its deliberate efforts to bury Bradley Manning's case because his truth-telling effectively puts the U.S. government on trial. Pentagon Papers whistleblower Daniel Ellsberg proclaimed Manning a hero for all humanity, addressing the audience of military veterans, lesbian and gay rights activists, civil libertarians, anti-war radicals and left organizations.

Despite the best efforts of the U.S. government and the subservient "free press," Manning's case has become an international cause célèbre. Concluding a 14-month investigation, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on torture found the United States government guilty of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment of Manning, violating his physical and psychological well-being and the presumption of his innocence. The German Bundestag and British Members of Parliament went on record protesting the physical and mental abuse of Manning, while hundreds of law school professors signed a letter of protest to President Obama.

continued on page 8

SF Pride Board Salutes U.S. Imperialism, Spits on Manning

With the eyes of the world on the court-martial of Bradley Manning, controversy over his case has ripped through San Francisco's large gay community. After SF Pride members announced on April 26 that Manning had been elected as an honorary grand marshal for the annual Gay Pride Day Parade on June 29-30, the SF Pride Board overturned the decision within hours. In a written statement, SF Pride president Lisa L. Williams denounced Manning's election as "a mistake" that "should never have been allowed to happen." Echoing the government's charge that Manning "aided the enemy" by revealing some of the crimes of U.S. imperialism, Williams proclaimed that "even the hint of support for actions which placed in harms [sic] way the lives of our men and women in uniform...will not be tolerated by the leadership of San Francisco Pride."

Enraged by Williams' condemnation of a man they rightly view as a hero, Manning supporters protested at a May 7 meeting of the Pride Board. The Board then prevaricated, claiming that Manning's election was a procedural violation of a requirement that the grand marshal be a local gay person, and declared the discussion over. But liberal Democratic city supervisor David Campos, a gay Latino, mandated a public meeting to patch up the controversy, pointing to Pride as "an organization which receives City funding."

At a May 31 open forum in the Castro district, over 100 people, including from groups like the Bradley Manning Support Network, Code Pink and Iraq Veterans Against the War, confronted the Board and demanded Manning's reinstatement as honorary grand marshal. Speakers pointed out that Manning is being witchhunted for telling the truth about the bloody deeds of the U.S. armed forces. Indeed, some pointed out, left-talking Democrats in the Pride milieu would have hailed Manning's actions if the Republican Bush were still in the White House, but they cannot stand telling the truth about Commander-in-Chief Obama, a Democrat.

To widespread applause, a Spartacus Youth Club speaker declared at the forum:

> "Bradley Manning is a hero. He should be hailed for exposing U.S. imperialist crimes and atrocities all over the world. By doing so, he performed a great service to workers and the oppressed, and they in turn have a direct interest in seeing him freed—immediately!
>
> "But the SF Pride Board rejected Manning, spat on him and denounced him. They've taken Obama's side in the 'war on terror,' Obama's side in the war on civil liberties. They have sided with Manning's jailers and torturers. They apologize for and defend the greatest force of violence, terror and oppression on earth: U.S. imperialism."

Harking back to early days, many in attendance expressed dismay at how

continued on page 10

WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 1027 12 July 2013

Egypt Coup: Blood-Soaked Military Ousts Reactionary Morsi

JULY 8—Five days after ousting the reactionary government of Mohamed Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood, the Egyptian military has gunned down more than 50 Morsi supporters outside a Republican Guard officers club in Cairo, where the Islamist leader is believed to be held. With this massacre, the military has sent a message: what they're doing to Brotherhood supporters today they are prepared to do tomorrow to anyone standing in the way of order.

The July 3 coup took place after days of massive protests around the country demanding the resignation of Morsi, whose year in power was marked by the continuing collapse of the economy, mounting shortages of fuel and other necessities and heavy-handed attempts to reinforce Islamic legal and social strictures. News of the coup and Morsi's arrest was cheered by hundreds of thousands who had gathered in Cairo's Tahrir Square. Military helicopters and jet fighters flew overhead, driving home the generals' message that they are the "defenders of the nation" and the ultimate arbiters of who will rule. In nightly clashes between pro- and anti-Morsi forces, scores died on both sides. Now, after today's bloodbath, the Muslim Brotherhood has called to

continued on page 7

See Page 4 **Egypt: For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!**

Turkey: Mass Protests Shake Islamist Regime

AFP

Reuters

Left: Protesters in Ankara demanding resignation of Islamist Erdogan government carry poster of Kemal Atatürk, founder of modern Turkish state, June 16. Right: Riot police fire water cannon to clear demonstrators from Istanbul's Taksim Square, June 22.

Turkey continues to be roiled by protests that began at the end of May directed against the government of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his Justice and Development Party (AKP). The protests, which have taken place in a number of cities, were triggered by brutal attempts by the police to enforce plans for a building project in Gezi Park near Taksim Square in central Istanbul. The government's hardline response has for now succeeded in tamping down the scope of the demonstrations. Some 8,000 people have been injured, 60 of them seriously, with eleven blinded by tear gas canisters fired at them. Four demonstrators have been killed, while unknown numbers of people have been arrested or have disappeared.

Turkish society is polarized. Erdogan retains a base of support, particularly among the bourgeoisie in the country's Anatolian heartland and among the rural masses. Those who have protested are concentrated among younger elements in the better-educated middle classes in the larger cities who deeply resent Erdogan's Islamist regime. Some workers in Turkey's politically divided trade-union movement have participated, as have members of the oppressed Kurdish national minority.

After coming to power in 2002, Erdogan and the AKP proceeded to implement their reactionary religious program. Turkey today has over 85,000 mosques, one for every 900 citizens—compared to one hospital for every 60,000 citizens, with more imams (prayer leaders) than doctors or teachers. In his first term, Erdogan tried unsuccessfully to pass a law criminalizing adultery, with three years in jail for straying from the marriage bed. Koran study classes were introduced in primary schools.

More recently, restrictions on the sale and advertisement of alcohol were imposed. After Turkish Airlines attempted to force female flight attendants to wear new uniforms featuring ankle-length dresses and tried to ban red lipstick and nail polish, protests forced the company to back down. In his crusade against abortion (and Caesarean sections as well!), Erdogan lectured Turkish women to have at least three children. He has also frequently denounced gay rights. Last May, kissing was banned in the subway of the capital city, Ankara, targeting couples acting against "moral rules."

An important part of the backdrop to the current protests was the agreement the government reached in March with the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which for three decades has been waging a military struggle in predominantly Kurdish southeastern Turkey against the central government. Over 40,000 Kurds have been butchered by the army in their courageous effort to assert Kurdish national rights. The agreement is supposed to provide "autonomy" for the Kurdish people, including greater cultural and language rights, as well as freedom for PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan and other imprisoned activists. While keeping its weapons, the PKK declared a cease-fire, with many of its fighters withdrawing to the Kurdish enclave in northern Iraq. PKK military leaders have complained of the one-sided "peace process" in which the Kurds make concessions while new Turkish army posts

continued on page 8

Break with Islamic Reaction, Turkish Nationalism—
For Workers Revolution!
For a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan!

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PC Partisan Defense Committee

CLASS-STRUGGLE DEFENSE NOTES

The PDC is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League.

Protest Prison Harassment of Mumia Abu-Jamal!

Mumia Abu-Jamal, a former Black Panther, renowned journalist and supporter of the Philadelphia MOVE organization, is America's foremost class-war prisoner. Mumia was railroaded to death row in 1982 on false charges of killing a police officer. In December 2011, the death sentence was removed, but Mumia still remains sentenced to life in prison without parole. The following is a July 6 letter from the Partisan Defense Committee to John E. Wetzel of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections.

We write to protest recent administrative measures taken against political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. Prison officials suspended Mr. Jamal's access to telephone communication for two weeks as punishment for a phone interview with Philadelphia attorney Michael Coard, on his WURD program, "Radio Courtroom."

In 1998, the Third Circuit Court of Appeals found that Mr. Abu-Jamal had a First Amendment right to make radio commentaries as well as written ones. The court enjoined attempts by the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections to interfere with or otherwise punish Mr. Abu-Jamal for exercise of this right, one it held protected by the First and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution, see *Abu-Jamal v. Price* 154 F3d 122 (3rd Circ. 1998). The court also ruled that the punitive actions in violation of his free speech rights caused Mr. Abu-Jamal irreparable harm.

We also protest the refusal of prison officials to permit contact visitation between Mr. Abu-Jamal and his son Jamal Hart. Mr. Abu-Jamal spent almost 30 years in the isolation of death row based on a sentence that in late 2011 was finally adjudged illegal. The Department's current actions violate not only his First Amendment rights to speech, but in isolating him from his family recall the illegal deprivations he suffered on death row for three decades.

We urge you to reinstate Mr. Abu-Jamal's telephone access, desist from any further interference with his free speech rights, and permit contact visitation with his son. ■

TROTSKY

LENIN

U.S. Capitalism: Racist Divide-and-Rule

Writing during the outbreak of the 1950s civil rights struggles, George Breitman, a leader of the then-revolutionary Socialist Workers Party, explained that the bourgeoisie's strangling of Reconstruction in the years following the Civil War signified that anti-black racism would endure as a fundamental feature of American capitalism. Today, the deepening immiseration of the black masses and the rollback of many gains of the civil rights movement underscore that genuine equality for black people will be achieved only through a socialist revolution carried out by the multiracial proletariat.

The striking thing about the Reconstruction period which followed the abolition of slavery was the speed with which old ideas and customs began to change and break up. In the course of a few short years millions of whites began to recover from the racist poisons to which they had been subjected from their birth, to regard Negroes as equals and to work together with them amicably, under the protection of the federal government, in the solution of joint problems. The obliteration of anti-Negro prejudice was started in the social revolution that we know by the name of Reconstruction, and it would have been completed if Reconstruction had been permitted to develop further.

But Reconstruction was halted and then strangled—by the capitalists, acting now in alliance with the former slaveholders. No exploiting class lightly discards weapons that can help maintain its rule, and anti-Negro prejudice had already demonstrated its potency as a force to divide, disrupt and disorient oppressed classes in an exploitative society. After some vacillation and internal struggle that lasted through most of Reconstruction, the capitalist class decided it could make use of anti-Negro prejudice for its own purposes. The capitalists adopted it, nursed it, fed it, gave it new clothing, and infused it with a vigor and an influence it had never commanded before. Anti-Negro prejudice today operates in a different social setting and therefore in a somewhat different form than a century ago, but it was retained after slavery for essentially the same reason that it was introduced under the slave system that developed from the sixteenth century on—for its convenience as an instrument of exploitation; and for that same reason it will not be abandoned by the ruling class of any exploitative society in this country.

—George Breitman, "When Anti-Negro Prejudice Began,"
Fourth International (Spring 1954)

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.

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No. 1027 **12 July 2013**

Guantánamo: Fear and Hunger

By Mumia Abu-Jamal

We print below a column by class-war prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal transcribed from a June 6 prisonradio.org recording.

The word "Guantánamo" has become a watchword for the world. It is a temple of state terror, of imperial fear and American hypocrisy.

Since 2002, it has been transformed from a U.S. naval base on Cuban soil—against the wishes of the Cuban government, it must be said—to a global torture center and an interrogation chamber. Opened under Bush/Cheney and maintained under Obama, it has been a detention center designed for perpetual detention to hundreds of men and boys. An international outcry forced the government to release over 500 men back to half a dozen countries.

Today 166 men remain languishing there with dozens on a hunger strike, an act of desperation after a decade in Guantánamo without charges. Eighty-six men have been cleared for release but remain in chains years later. President Barack Obama campaigned on Guantánamo's closure. But five years later, it remains. In the last few months, the Obama Administration began seizing family letters and photos, the only connection to their loved ones, as they can't receive family visitors. In desperation, dozens of men have launched a hunger strike, a desperate measure for a desperate situation.

The government's response? To lower cell temperatures and to force-feed them by stuffing a filthy tube down their throats to fill aching stomachs. Thus they are torturing men by force-feeding them so that they can live in the torture of indefinite detention.

America boasts to the world of its human rights and its values but they can't hear them over the cries, screams and moans of the tortured in Guantánamo. Demand that Guantánamo be closed immediately. Free the Guantánamo detainees and return them to their home countries.

From imprisoned nation, this is Mumia Abu-Jamal.

* * *

***WV* Update**: Adding insult to extreme injury, the Obama administration refused a request by four Guantánamo inmates on hunger strike that force-feeding be stopped during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, which began on July 8. Some 45 men out of the 106 currently on hunger strike are being force-fed, a procedure that the United Nations and other bodies officially recognize as torture but that the U.S. government cynically describes as "humane, high-quality medical care to preserve life and health" (quoted in "Guantánamo Authorities 'Planning Ramadan Force-Feeding Factory'," London *Guardian*, 5 July).

The authorities claim that Ramadan will be respected while holding out the option to force-feed in the daytime if "any unforseen emergency or operational issues" arise. Even so, as a legal filing by the inmates' attorneys notes, "fasting detainees, who may not take water during the daylight hours of Ramadan, will be spending up to four more nighttime hours without access to water as well as being under physical restraint, putting them at substantial risk of dehydration and sleep deprivation." Free the detainees now! U.S. out of Guantánamo!

Sadistic Feds Deny Lynne Stewart Release

Free Her Now!

The Director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, Charles E. Samuels Jr., has denied compassionate release for 73-year-old leftist lawyer Lynne Stewart, whose health is rapidly deteriorating due to Stage IV breast cancer that has spread to her lungs, lymph nodes and shoulders. With a long history of defending radicals, black militants and the poor, Stewart was convicted in 2005 in a "war on terror" show trial, along with her interpreter, Mohamed Yousry, and her paralegal, Ahmed Abdel Sattar, for her vigorous defense of a blind Egyptian cleric imprisoned for an alleged plot to blow up New York City landmarks in the 1990s. Originally sentenced to 28 months in prison, Stewart was resentenced in 2010 to ten years at the instigation of the Obama administration. We noted at the time that this was effectively a death sentence, which the Feds are clearly determined to carry out.

Samuels, appointed head of America's vast dungeon system by Attorney General Eric Holder in 2011, has spat on the demands of over 20,000 people who have signed a petition for Stewart's release, ignoring as well the recommendations of the warden of the Federal Medical Center Carswell in Texas, where Stewart languishes. Stewart is too weak to receive medical treatment to arrest the cancer, and her white blood cell count has dropped to dangerous levels. Her husband, Ralph Poynter, has fought valiantly for her release and return to her family in New York City. In a statement following the Feds' decision—an act of calculated cruelty—Poynter declared, "We shall not stand by idly while the Federal Bureau of Prisons murders Lynne Stewart."

An April report by the Department of Justice's inspector general advised greater use of "compassionate release" for terminally ill federal prisoners—those with 18 months' or less life expectancy—in order to "save taxpayer money and reduce overcrowding" (*New York Times*, 1 May). But the capitalist state always has special rules for those who put a thorn in its side. One sick measure of this policy is that when Stewart asked to get her own medical records—a simple matter of photocopying—she was told to appeal in six months through the Freedom of Information Act! We have long fought for freedom for Lynne Stewart, a recipient in the Partisan Defense Committee's Class-War Prisoner Stipend Program, and continue to urge our readers to sign the petition posted on lynnestewart.org. *Free Lynne Stewart now!* ■

PDC Annual Fundraiser BBQ

BAY AREA

Sunday, July 21, 1 to 5 p.m.
Crab Cove Regional Park
1252 McKay Ave., Alameda
Crolls Garden Picnic Area
(2nd BBQ area from Visitors Center)
Public transport: AC Transit 51A (from East Bay) or O (from SF) bus lines to Webster and Santa Clara, walk to park.
Information: (510) 839-0852

Support the work of the PDC! Bring your checkbook!

Asylum Now for Edward Snowden!

JULY 8—Five weeks after the London *Guardian* printed accounts of the massive collection of phone records and Internet spying by the National Security Agency (NSA), former agency contractor Edward Snowden, who provided the documentation, by all accounts remains holed up in the transit section of a Moscow airport. Stung by Snowden's revelations, the U.S. imperialists are seeking their pound of flesh. The State Department weeks ago revoked Snowden's passport to prevent his travel as Washington fights to return him to the U.S., where he would face decades in prison on charges of espionage, theft and conversion of government property. Venezuela, Nicaragua and Bolivia to their credit have offered him political asylum. In tearing yet another veil off the U.S. spying machine, Snowden performed a great service to workers and the oppressed, in the U.S. and internationally, who are the ultimate target of the capitalist rulers' apparatus of state repression.

Early speculation that Ecuador would offer asylum to Snowden was dashed when President Rafael Correa backtracked, stating on June 27 that such a request could only be considered if Snowden were on Ecuadorian territory. This came after Vice President Joe Biden worked the phones to put pressure on leaders of Snowden's possible destination countries. The arm-twisting culminated last week in a chilling act of imperial arrogance against the president of impoverished Bolivia, Evo Morales. After Morales announced in Moscow that he would consider giving asylum to Snowden, Spain, Portugal, Italy and France, clearly acting at the behest of the U.S., closed their airspace on July 2 to block Morales' plane on the return trip to La Paz, claiming they had information that Snowden was on board. Diverted from their planned route, which had been agreed to in advance, pilots in fear of running out of fuel were forced to land in Vienna, where the plane was kept for 14 hours before being allowed to depart.

Bolivia's ambassador to the United Nations rightly denounced this as an act of aggression. The country's vice president, Alvaro García Linera, bluntly stated that Morales was "kidnapped by imperialism." Bolivia formally filed a complaint with the United Nations on July 3, one day after Ban Ki-moon, the secretary general of this tool of imperialism, denounced Snowden for "misuse" of access to information. Outrage over the incident resonated across Latin America. Argentina's president, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, denounced the "vestiges of colonialism," adding, "We believe this constitutes not only the humiliation of a sister nation but of all South America." The bourgeois populist regimes of Venezuela, Ecuador and Uruguay also protested, while newspapers and political commentators recalled centuries of U.S. interventions, invasions and occupations.

While the European "democracies" initially preened as champions of the privacy rights being trampled in the U.S., it did not take long before Germany was revealed to be working on massively increasing its capacity to intercept communications and that France is engaged in the same kind of mass data collection as the NSA. These same governments huffed and puffed late last month when it was revealed that the NSA had bugged their diplomatic offices in Washington, the UN and Brussels. In a rare moment of candor, Obama dismissed spying among friends as commonplace, saying, "That's how intelligence services operate." Behind the imperialists' diplomatic skullduggery—conducted at times with and at times against one another—is their drive to exploit the world's workers and oppressed in accord with their distinct interests.

Edward Snowden is a courageous young man who is paying a steep price for making public some of the secret workings of the capitalist state. Others who have shed light on the government's domestic spying include retired Bay Area AT&T worker Mark Klein, who came forward seven years ago to reveal how the NSA had tapped into AT&T's fiber-optic cables in order to access much of the country's Internet data flow. Like the court-martial of Bradley Manning for his revelations of U.S. imperialist barbarity, the government's attempt to seize and lock away Edward Snowden goes hand in hand with the enormous extension of police powers and evisceration of civil liberties in the name of the "war on terror." Obama & Co. are after their hides as a marker of what lies in store for anyone contemplating blowing the whistle on the crimes of this planet's most dangerous imperialist power. We demand: Hands off Edward Snowden! ■

Letter

Porn, NAMBLA and Bourgeois Moralism

17 April 2013

The "Young Spartacist" (3-22-13) article defends pornography... it raises questions about your method.

Who produces pornography? Capitalist companies. Who sells it? Capitalist companies. They exploit sex workers just as other capitalists do. Most pornography is mechanical, with almost no humanity. Everything in this society, especially human beings, are a commodity under capitalism. But you seem now to have become advocates of capitalist libertarianism.

Of course, pornography appeals to the deep alienation in modern capitalist society between human beings.

But laws against pornography will not end that alienation. Only the destruction of capitalism and the formation of a socialist society will end pornography as we know it. But you don't say that...

Marxists need to defend sexuality but not its commercialization. Neither do we have to defend NAMBLA, the North American Man/Boy Love Association. Again NAMBLA reflects the alienation of some individuals who gain power over youth through their pocket books rather than "love." Sexuality again is turned into a financial transaction. Children cannot be expected to give "effective consent" which your writer requires from children.

Capitalism is haunted by mental illness and treatment is only available to the rich. Laws which ban one manifestation of capitalism will not work!

Earl Gilman

[*All ellipses are the author's.—ed.*]

***WV* replies:**

Earl Gilman's objections to our article "Church of Avakian Decrees: No Nudes Is Good Nudes" (*Young Spartacus* pages, *WV* No. 1020, 22 March), a polemic against the Maoist Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), puts him in very unsavory company. And hardly for the first time: having been associated with an assortment of pseudo-Trotskyist currents over the decades, Gilman was aptly described in *WV* many years ago as "a walking culture medium for every deviation known to Marxism" (in "BT Provocation Fizzles," *WV* No. 417, 5 December 1986).

In addition to enlightening us as to his opinion of the artistic qualities of "most pornography," Gilman belabors the obvious—pornography is produced and distributed by capitalist companies. And so it is, along with the food we eat, the clothes we wear, the computer on which he composed his letter, etc. What does this prove? Merely that, like all commodities, porn has a use value. People buy it because they like it. Product of capitalism? Porn has been around for millennia. If, as Gilman puts it, "socialist society will end pornography as we know it," surely it would only be to improve its quality.

Henry Flower

Ancient Indian temple art: porn of a precapitalist age.

Our attitude was concisely stated in the *amici curiae* brief filed by the Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee in the Supreme Court in 1988 against state use of RICO conspiracy laws to shut down publishers and distributers of allegedly "obscene" material (*Fort Wayne Books, Inc. vs. State of Indiana, et al.*). As the brief stated: "People have the right to read or look at whatever they want, to write, paint or film it too, and to engage in whatever sexual practices (or none at all) they choose, so long as they're consensual. The point is neither to proscribe, nor prescribe, what kind of sex people 'should' have." The arguments in our brief did not fall from the sky but were based on cited works of classic Marxism and the Enlightenment as well as scholars and writers from Harold Laski to Gore Vidal.

Our line should be simple enough to grasp for any self-described Marxist: Government out of the bedroom! But Gilman joins forces with purveyors of the truly twisted "morality" of the capitalist rulers and their state. Gilman's smear of NAMBLA gives the game away. NAMBLA is an organization that supports the sexual rights of youth, including those in relationships with older men, and opposes laws that punish consensual relationships, such as reactionary "age of consent" laws. For this it has been the target of a vicious, decades-long witchhunt by the capitalist state and media. Gilman's cheering on the crusade against NAMBLA is lamentably common for pseudo-socialists and establishment gay rights groups, serving as a measure of their proximity to bourgeois "family values" hypocrisy and their great distance from the class line, let alone from the remotest concept of real human freedom.

Sounding like the Victorian judges who imprisoned Oscar Wilde not only for homosexuality but also for "corrupting the morals of youth," Gilman rants about NAMBLA supporters' alleged "power over youth through their pocket books" and echoes the bigotry of the RCP in slandering NAMBLA as "child molesters." To bolster his refusal to defend NAMBLA, Gilman asserts that "children cannot be expected to give 'effective consent'," period. Millions of sexually active teenagers can tell you differently, not to mention thousands of years' worth of anthropological evidence, including literature, paintings, sculpture. "Age of consent" laws are aimed not at "protecting our children" but at imposing abstinence on and promoting guilt in youth who wish to have sex—and at locking up adults who "deviate" from the sexual "norms" that the ruling class tries to foist on the masses while they themselves, more often than not, honor those norms in the breach.

The Victorians put under lock and key all the artwork portraying sex, paganism and naked bodies that Britain had looted from ancient civilizations in the lands they conquered for their Empire. They also locked up Oscar Wilde. Gilman's position draws from this well. Perhaps he thinks that the three topless women who carried an ANSWER Coalition banner in the "Free Bradley Manning" contingent at the recent gay pride parade in San Francisco were exploiting themselves. At any rate, his anti-porn nonsense and anti-NAMBLA screed play into the hands of a contemporary, very real anti-sex witchhunt by the capitalist state. ■

NOTICE

***Workers Vanguard* skips alternate issues in June, July and August. Our next issue will be dated August 9.**

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Egypt: For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

Part One
The Legacy of Colonial Subjugation

The image flashed around the world in December 2011: a young woman, her clothing ripped off to bare her blue bra, being dragged through Cairo's Tahrir Square by military thugs who beat and kicked her. It presented a stark symbol of the degradation of women in Egypt, whose oppression has long been codified in law and enforced as well through customs such as seclusion.

The mass upheaval against the U.S.-backed regime of Hosni Mubarak, whose rule rested heavily on the military, repeatedly thrust the miserable status of women into the spotlight. Driven by poverty and an immense desire to throw off dictatorial rule and the many-sided oppression endemic to Egyptian capitalist society, women were among millions of demonstrators from virtually all social classes who braved police bullets and took to the streets in the January 2011 mass protests. Their presence, which challenged the traditional, stifling patriarchal order, was answered by intense measures of suppression carried out by the military, police and Islamist mobs. The protests succeeded in driving out the hated Mubarak. But the political forces at their head—from bourgeois liberals and nationalists to (belatedly) the Muslim Brotherhood—offered only another face of capitalist class dictatorship over the workers, the poor, women and all the oppressed.

In March 2011, a month after Mubarak's overthrow, thugs mobilized around slogans such as "the people want to bring down women" and "the Koran is our ruler" attacked an International Women's Day demonstration in Cairo, telling those assembled, "This is against Islam" and "Go home, go wash clothes." Women arrested at a protest the next day were forced by the military to undergo "virginity tests" in an act of calculated humiliation.

Mubarak was quickly replaced by the direct rule of the military, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF). But in the June 2012 presidential elections, the Muslim Brotherhood's Mohamed Morsi defeated the SCAF's handpicked candidate, Ahmed Shafiq. In exchange for protecting the lucrative economic prerogatives of the high command, Morsi secured the resignation of top SCAF leaders in an attempt to firm up his position as president. Now the military has swept him from power, reasserting direct rule to try to enforce social peace.

The Lash of Political Islam

Women would immediately feel the lash of political Islam in power. Last year, in an ominous sign of what the Islamists had in store, hardline Salafists and other Islamists introduced bills in parliament to eliminate the law (honored in the breach) against the horrendous practice of female genital mutilation, to rescind the limited right of women to divorce and to lower the age of marriage for girls to 14. The government television station also began featuring women announcers in headscarves, overturning a decades-long secular dress code. Despite large protests in November and December, Morsi pushed through a new constitution reinforcing Islam as the official religion and subordinating the minimal rights formally granted women to *sharia* (Islamic law). Islamist clerics have been regularly going on television to demand the veiling of women and the banning of alcohol, to be enforced by religious police. Meanwhile, sexual assaults, particularly against protesters, continue with impunity, with clerics lashing out at women heading toward Tahrir Square as "devils...going there to get raped."

AP

Reuters

Cairo: Women march in protest against police violence, 20 December 2011 (above), three days after infamous brutalization of female protester in Tahrir Square (below).

These harsh facts should be enough to expose the political bankruptcy of those reformist "socialists" in Egypt and around the world who portrayed the anti-Mubarak upheaval as a revolution. As in Tunisia and elsewhere, what took place in Egypt during the "Arab Spring" was no revolution. The repressive forces of the capitalist state—centrally the military and the police—have remained intact. The already desperate material conditions of life for the overwhelming majority of the population have in fact worsened over the last year as food prices and unemployment continue to climb. While the last two years of social turmoil have been a big factor in Egypt's economic dislocation, the working people have certainly not escaped the effects of the world capitalist economic crisis, which has led to brutal attacks on workers' living standards internationally.

As he tightened the grip of Islamic reaction, Morsi signaled his intent to restore "stability" in order to foster a climate conducive to capitalist profit-making. "Since Mursi assumed office," wrote Near East historian Joel Beinin, "physical and legal attacks on trade union activists have increased. Hundreds of workers have been fired for trade union activities and thugs have beaten many others" (*Middle East Report and Information Project*, 18 January). In tandem with state repression, the Islamists sought to bring unions under their control by maneuvering their own members into the leadership, including in many of the unions that had corporatist ties to the state under Mubarak. Presaging yet more attacks on working people and the poor, the government, which already receives more than $1 billion in U.S. aid annually, appealed for a $4.8 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund based on a program of austerity.

What happens in Egypt, which with more than 90 million people is the most populous Arab state, reverberates throughout the Near East. In a region made up of artificial entities carved by the imperialist powers from the carcass of the Ottoman Empire, Egypt is the only country that has maintained a distinct historic identity through the millennia. It is the social, political and cultural center of the Arab world, generating its defining ideologies. Pan-Arab nationalism was put to the test in Egypt under Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser. The Muslim Brotherhood, the first mass movement committed to the creation of an Islamic state and the grandfather of Islamist movements from North Africa to Southeast Asia, was also born in Egypt.

Developments in Egypt will have far-reaching consequences throughout the rest of the Muslim world. But under capitalist class domination, the only alternative for the working class and the oppressed who chafed under the rule of the Islamists is the bleak prospect of a return to bonapartist military rule. Revolutionary Marxism offers a different perspective, based on the potential of the working class to be the gravediggers of capitalist rule. The Egyptian proletariat has a long history of militant struggle. The years leading up to the ouster of Mubarak saw a strike wave that Beinin described as "the largest social movement Egypt has witnessed in more than half a century" ("The Struggle for Worker Rights in Egypt," solidaritycenter.org, February 2010). But those strikes were confined to sectional economic demands, and the working class remains *politically* atomized and subordinated to bourgeois political forces.

As we have stressed from the outset of the "Arab Spring," what is necessary is for the working class in Tunisia, Egypt and elsewhere to emerge under its own banner as the champion of all the exploited and oppressed in struggle against all bourgeois forces—imperialists, secular nationalists, political Islamists. This requires the leadership of proletarian vanguard parties equipped with a program that can lead the daily struggles of the toilers toward the overturn of the capitalist order as part of the fight for world socialist revolution.

Colonial Subjugation...

The fact that age-old practices hideously oppressive to women can exist side-by-side with elements of modern industry and infrastructure is above all the product of Egypt's belated capitalist development and its legacy of imperialist subjugation.

Well before the capitalist epoch, Egypt, with its strategic position on the Mediterranean astride the commercial routes between Asia and Europe, had been a magnet for the colonial ambitions of world powers. For over 2,000 years, until Nasser came to power in 1952, the country did not see a native ruler. Conquerors who occupied the country over the centuries include Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, the Arabs, the Ottomans and others. In 1798, Napoleon invaded Egypt, only to be driven out three years later by an Ottoman/British alliance.

Muhammad Ali, commander-in-chief of Albanian forces in the Ottoman army,

became governor in 1805. In 1807, he crushed a British attempt to occupy Egypt. The dynasty he founded would rule Egypt until 1952. While he paid homage to the Sultan in Constantinople, the Ottoman capital, Muhammad Ali was effectively a sovereign ruler. In the first decades of the 19th century, he attempted to modernize the country, aiming to establish the basis of a modern economy, including by promoting the intensive cultivation of cotton as a cash crop for export. He brought most of the land under state control and expanded agricultural production by constructing dams and irrigation canals.

To protect the country's nascent industries, Muhammad Ali's regime instituted a state monopoly on trade and placed an embargo on imported materials, in particular lower-cost British textiles. He also modernized and expanded the health services and instituted the first secular public schools, which admitted both men and women and included specialized schools to train doctors, engineers and veterinarians. In 1822, Egypt's first printing house was opened, publishing books in Arabic, Turkish and Persian.

The regime established a modern army numbering well over 100,000 men, a naval force and a merchant marine. By the 1830s, Muhammad Ali ruled over a stretch of land that reached as far as Syria in the north, Sudan in the south and parts of the Arabian Peninsula in the east. Such was Egypt's development that Karl Marx described it in the 30 July 1853 *New York Daily Tribune* as the "only vital element" in the Ottoman Empire. While the reforms turned Egypt into a strong and viable state, they were brought about through high taxation, *corvée* (forced) labor and the brutal oppression of workers, artisans and *fellahin* (peasants) as well as of the subjugated peoples of Syria, Arabia and the Sudan.

National Media Museum

Public execution of Egyptian by British colonial overlords, Alexandria, 1882.

Britain's capitalist rulers were incensed by Muhammad Ali's aggressive industrial policies. They feared the emergence of a powerful state that would threaten their interests in the region, potentially cutting their overland routes to India and other Asian colonies, closing the eastern Mediterranean market to British goods and depriving Lancashire textile mills of prized, long-staple Egyptian cotton. In 1840, British and Austrian forces, in alliance with the Ottomans, landed in Syria and defeated the Egyptian army, which was within a few days' march of Constantinople. At Alexandria, under the muzzles of the British navy, Muhammad Ali was forced to sign an agreement returning Syria and Arabia to Ottoman rule, radically reducing the size of his army and navy, paying a large tribute to the Sultan, disbanding monopolies and lifting embargoes. As Marx observed in the *Tribune* (25 July 1853), the European powers reduced to impotence the only man who might have "replaced a 'dressed up turban' by a real head." Egypt's brief experiment in industrialization came to a halt, the country reduced to supplying raw materials for European industry.

faroukmisr.net

Painting (circa 1830-48) of Muhammad Ali, who built army and naval forces as part of attempt to modernize Egypt.

...And Its Legacy

The colonial powers continued their economic devastation of Egypt under Muhammad Ali's successors. In acceding to French plans to build the Suez Canal, Egypt's rulers were forced to seek out enormous foreign loans, negotiated on terms highly favorable to the European banks. The British and French governments would hold majority interest in the canal while Egypt supplied *corvée* labor and went into debt to build it. Over 100,000 Egyptians died in the canal's construction.

For a brief period during the American Civil War, Egypt had benefited from the boom in cotton prices caused by the blockade of Southern U.S. ports. To speed up export, the government embarked on huge infrastructure projects, building roads, bridges and lighthouses and deepening harbors. But the boom rapidly came to a halt, and the regime was forced to borrow beyond its means to finance these projects. When the Suez Canal opened in 1869, the government was unable to pay even the interest on the loans. Indebtedness compelled Egypt's rulers to sell the country's share in the canal to Britain, ceding total control over it to European powers.

With Egypt rapidly sliding into bankruptcy, Britain and France took joint control of its finances and public works. Resentment of foreign domination, state repression and crippling taxation fueled a revolt led by Ahmad Urabi, a native army colonel, under the slogan "Egypt for the Egyptians." Britain invaded in 1882, defeating the nationalist uprising and occupying the country for seven decades. Not only did the British rulers arrest capitalist development—by World War I, cotton accounted for 90 percent of Egypt's exports—but they also bolstered the most reactionary and repressive aspects of semi-feudal society. Her Majesty's Government found its best friends in the corrupt palace, the old Turkish-Circassian ruling circles and the banks and moneylenders, all of whom profited from the exploitation of the peasants, who were subjected to *corvée* and taxed to bare subsistence to pay off monstrous government debts.

Before the British occupation, education for both boys and girls was provided at government expense. The colonial administration instituted tuition, including for primary education, and sharply restricted education for girls. Evelyn Baring, Lord Cromer, who ruled Egypt on behalf of Britain for a quarter century, warned: "Egypt being essentially an agricultural country, agriculture must of necessity be its first care. Any education, technical or general, which tended to leave the fields untilled, or to lessen the fitness or disposition of the people for agricultural employment, would be a national evil" (quoted in John T. Chalcraft, *The Striking Cabbies of Cairo* [2004]).

The British rulers justified their colonial occupations with the racist claim of bringing civilization to the "inferior races" and liberating women from backwardness. So whom did these "champions" of women send to administer their colonies? In Britain, Cromer and George Curzon, former Viceroy and Governor General of India, were fervent opponents of giving women the vote. Cromer presided over the merger of separate men's and women's anti-suffragist leagues into the National League for Opposing Woman Suffrage in 1910; Curzon succeeded him as president.

Imperialism and Social Backwardness

The development of capitalism in Europe had required the destruction of the political and economic chains of the old feudal order. In 1789 in France, in the classic example of a bourgeois-democratic revolution, the rising bourgeoisie mobilized the peasantry and urban lower classes to bring itself to political power under the banner of the universal rights of man. In place of an economy based on localized production and dominated by the landed aristocracy and the church, the new bourgeois ruling class consolidated a nation-state, separated church and state and established a parliamentary system, a national code of laws and a national currency.

However, with the emergence of imperialism toward the end of the 19th century, a handful of the most powerful capitalist powers acted to suppress indigenous development in colonial and semicolonial countries. The weak, despotic bourgeoisies in countries such as Egypt were incapable of achieving the democratic tasks associated with the bourgeois revolutions in Europe. In fear of the working class, they could not break from their imperialist masters and achieve national independence. To maintain their power, they relied on the refuse of the past—e.g., precapitalist subjugation of the peasantry; domination by the mosques—together with brutal police and military repression.

Today Egypt teems with enormous contradictions rooted in its arrested development. On the streets of Cairo, among Mercedes and BMWs zigzag strings of donkey-drawn carriages. A tiny, wealthy elite holds sway over a resentful population mired in dire poverty. Millions are unemployed and some 40 percent of the population lives in degrading squalor. Landless peasants roam the Nile Valley searching for work. Many find "homes" in cemeteries; the more fortunate shelter in the tin-and-cardboard slums that ring major cities, providing a fertile recruitment ground for Islamic fundamentalists.

The wretched peasantry, constituting one-third of the population, lives in conditions not much advanced from those of Pharaonic Egypt. The majority are tenants, migrant rural laborers and smallholders who, on average, own less than one acre. Men work in the fields while women remain largely confined to domestic and maternal duties in the home, with occasional forays to the well and the marketplace. Women's oppression is nowhere more entrenched than in the backward agrarian areas, especially in Upper Egypt. As one young government bureaucrat put it, "Many fellahin here don't let their daughters leave the house to go to school and the like because they fear that their girls will gain a sense of freedom, which is always dangerous.... If they learn to read, they will read the wrong kinds of books, not the Koran" (quoted in Richard Adams, *Development and Social Change in Rural Egypt* [1986]).

The intertwining of religion with every aspect of society means that Coptic Christians, some 10 percent of the population, remain subject to Islamist terror and state persecution, which in turn reinforce the hold of the church over that community. In October 2011, protesters rallying against the burning of Coptic churches in Cairo were attacked by uniformed military forces and Islamist mobs. In collusion with the army and riot police, armed thugs roamed the streets seeking out Christians, including women and children, killing 27 and maiming hundreds.

Egypt presents a powerful argument for Leon Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution, which was starkly confirmed by the October Revolution of 1917 in Russia. Neither the state-sponsored industrial development under Nasser in the 1950s and '60s nor the "open door" to privatization and investment of his successors Sadat and Mubarak could break the chains of imperialist domination or resolve the contradictions posed by Egypt's combined and uneven development. As Trotsky explained in *The Permanent Revolution* (1930), for countries of belated capitalist development, "the complete and genuine solution of their tasks of achieving democracy and national emancipation is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat as the leader of the subjugated nation, above all of its peasant masses."

The Egyptian proletariat in power would expropriate the bourgeoisie and landlords, seizing the property holdings of the mosques, and break the chains of imperialist subjugation on the road to establishing a collectivized, planned economy in which production is based on social need rather than driven by profit. Proletarian revolution in Egypt would resonate

continued on page 6

Reuters

Shantytown in eastern Cairo, 2008.

Egypt, Women...

(continued from page 5)

throughout the world, not least in North Africa and the Near East as well as among the millions of North African workers in France and Turkish and Kurdish workers in Germany. Such workers could play a crucial role in linking the fight for socialist revolution in the neocolonial world to the struggles of workers in the imperialist centers to get rid of their own exploiters. Short of the overturn of capitalist rule in the advanced industrial countries, any development toward socialism in the more backward countries would be arrested and ultimately reversed under the pressures of world imperialism.

EPA

Rice planting in Nile Delta, 2008. Poverty, primitive conditions dominate Egyptian countryside.

"To Reach Womanhood Is to Enter a Prison"

In Egypt, the oppression of women is wrapped in ancient barbaric customs, the legacy of belated economic development reinforced by imperialist domination. Patriarchy in the family is fortified by religious ideology, both Coptic Christian and Muslim; daily life for women is drudgery and humiliation. In her novel *The Open Door*, Latifa al-Zayyat, a leftist jailed by Anwar Sadat in 1981, tells the story of Layla, a young woman who reaches adulthood during the Nasser era: "She grew to the realization that to reach womanhood was to enter a prison where the confines of one's life were clearly and decisively fixed."

The torment of females begins at childhood. Girls aged seven or younger are subjected to the hideous practice of female genital mutilation (FGM), a savagery that involves the cutting of the clitoris, aimed at curbing the sexuality of women and maintaining their chastity. This gross crime not only deprives women of their organs of sexual pleasure but also subjects them to intense pain during urination, menstruation, sexual intercourse and childbirth and causes them multiple medical complications throughout their adult lives. Though illegal since 1997, FGM is rampant across all classes in Egypt, and equally so among Muslims and Christians. According to the United Nations, 96 percent of women between the ages of 15 and 49 have undergone the practice.

A few decades ago, before the rise in Islamist influence, many urban women went around bareheaded and wore knee-length skirts and open-necked blouses. Today more than 80 percent of women don the headscarf. It is not uncommon to see women wearing billowing black robes and *niqab* veils that suffocate women as they cover the entire body and leave only narrow slits for the eyes.

vasi.net

Moscow, 1918: Women trained for military service in fledgling Soviet workers state.

Contrary to Islamist claims, the veil is not an exercise in religious freedom or a sign of modesty and submission to a deity. Nor is it simply a reactionary symbol of religious affiliation like the Christian cross or Jewish yarmulke. The veil—a glaring manifestation of the social program of the Islamists—is the physical expression of the submission of women to men, the permanent, imposed affirmation of their inferior status. It represents the extension outside the home of the seclusion imposed on women by Islamic law and enforced by fundamentalist intimidation and social pressure. Young women reluctantly heed the advice of their families to "wear the veil and stay alive."

As Marxists, we reject the liberal/nationalist notion of "cultural relativism," which prettifies the veil and other manifestations of the hideous oppression of women in the Third World as quaint cultural attributes. At the same time, we oppose state bans on the veil, which strengthen the bourgeoisie's repressive powers—a threat to minorities, workers and leftist organizations. In the imperialist West, such bans are an expression of anti-Muslim bigotry and serve only to drive women deeper into a cultural ghetto. Nor are such bans supportable in Islamic countries. When Turkey's Islamist government announced plans to scrap a longstanding ban on the headscarf in colleges, we noted that this would encourage fundamentalist mobs to try to force women to don the veil. Nonetheless, as we pointed out, "barring religious women from education and universities because they refuse to remove their headscarves can only deepen their isolation from secular currents, increasing the hold of religious reaction and family domination" ("Turkey: Women and the Permanent Revolution," *WV* No. 916, 6 June 2008).

"Honor killings" of women and girls for eloping or having sex outside marriage are widespread in Egypt, among both Muslims and Christians, and socially acceptable, especially in the rural areas. Perpetrators seldom get more than a slap on the wrist, since the law allows judges to reduce sentences for men who kill women in "crimes of passion." Accurate statistics are impossible to find, as most of these murders are either hushed up or reported as suicides.

By every index—wages, poverty, education, employment—women are at the bottom. Fully 60 percent are illiterate. Egyptian law, which has its basis in *sharia*, codifies the subordination of women to their male relatives. According to Islamic law, a woman's share of inheritance is half that of her brother. Laws based on *sharia* ban abortion (with very few exceptions), prohibit Muslim women from marrying non-Muslims, bar conversion to other religions and outlaw declarations of atheism. Until recently, children of women married to non-Egyptian men were denied citizenship. A man can still divorce his wife simply by saying "I divorce you," but for a woman to get a divorce she has to overcome numerous hurdles. A law passed in 2000 allowed women to sue for divorce on condition that they forfeit all their legal and financial rights. For Coptic Christians, it is all but impossible to get a divorce because their church proscribes it. Meanwhile, polygamy is legal.

The smothering effect of women's oppression goes well beyond their own enforced seclusion. There is no law criminalizing homosexuality, because the pretense is that homosexual behavior is unthinkable. Nonetheless, for transgressing sexual norms, gay men are a target of state torture and persecution as well as vigilante violence. In May 2001, 52 men were arrested in a raid on a boat party in Cairo. Charged with "habitual debauchery," "obscene behavior" and "deriding religion," they were tried in a secret military court, and 21 of them were sentenced to three years' hard labor (see *WV* No. 801, 11 April 2003). In 2007, two HIV-positive gay men were arrested, subjected to insults and beatings and detained for months. In 2008, four HIV-positive men were sentenced to three years in prison after being convicted of the "habitual practice of debauchery."

In his seminal work *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1884), Friedrich Engels traced the roots of the family—the main source of women's oppression—and of the state to the first division of society into classes. The invention of agriculture had provided a social surplus beyond what was required for basic subsistence. A ruling class developed based on private appropriation of that surplus as human society moved away from the primitive egalitarianism of the Stone Age. In order to transmit property from one generation to the next, the paternity of the heirs had to be assured, requiring women's sexual monogamy. Thus society places a premium on virginity and marital fidelity—for women. Raising new generations of toilers, the family, together with the church/mosque, instills obedience to authority among youth slated for wage slavery or to be cannon fodder in the armed forces. It also plays a major role in inculcating religious backwardness.

The imperialist and neocolonial worlds are both marked by the oppression of women. As with Islam and other religions, Christianity and Judaism have their own grisly traditions of anti-woman brutality that continue to this day. However, there is an enormous gulf between the status of women in advanced industrialized societies and in the imperialist-dominated societies of the Third World, an outcome of different paths of development. In Egypt, the veil, seclusion, the bride price, FGM, the concept of "family honor" and all the attendant mechanisms of social control over women have been carried forward from pre-capitalist society to the modern day.

These "customs" are not exclusively or even primarily Islamic. (FGM, which is widespread throughout much of Africa, is believed to have originated with animist tribes.) Rather, they are an outgrowth of primitive modes of production based on clans that hold and work the land in common. Inheritance, ownership and access to water and other necessities are determined through the family. Thus the virginity and marriageability of a daughter is a material asset to a patriarch. These barbarous customs can only be completely eliminated through the qualitative development of the productive forces in a socialist world, which will rip out the entrenched economic and social backwardness that is reinforced by imperialist domination. A workers and peasants government in Egypt would seize the property of the landlords and give land to poor peasants as initial steps toward collectivizing and industrializing agriculture.

It will require the overthrow of the capitalist system, which is based on private property in the means of production, and its replacement by a world planned economy under workers rule to build the foundations of a socialist society in which the institution of the family is replaced with collective childcare and socialized housework. Only then will women be freed from the confines of the home to participate fully and equally in political, social and economic life.

Workers Must Come to the Fore

In the last two years, as the Islamists worked toward consolidating their hold on political power, ostensible socialists shoved aside the question of women's oppression. Particularly notable on this account are the Revolutionary Socialists (RS), the Egyptian affiliate of the International Socialist Tendency founded by the late Tony Cliff, who unabashedly tail after the Islamists. Indeed, the RS formally endorsed Morsi in the 2012 elections—an act of treachery that the Cliff-

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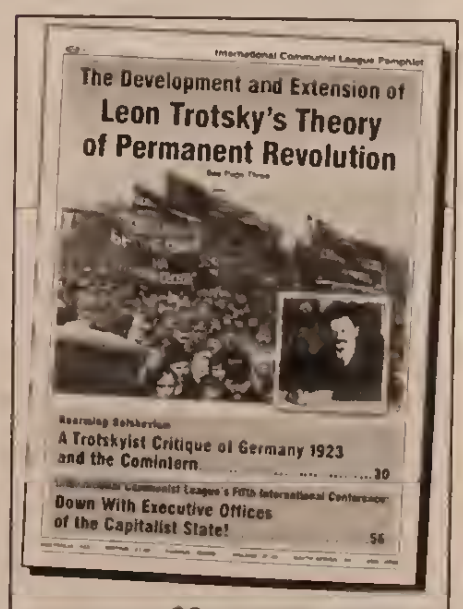

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Egypt Coup...

(continued from page 1)

extend its protests into a national uprising.

As Marxists, we are just as adamantly opposed to the coup as we are to government by the Islamists. Many of the bourgeois-nationalist and liberal-reformist organizations that helped kick off the anti-Morsi protests whitewash the coup, which the military warned of well ahead of time, by claiming that the masses in the street are determining events. The opportunist Revolutionary Socialists, who a year ago called for a vote to Morsi, now chime in with talk of a "second revolution." The masses that rose up two years ago against the hated bonapartist regime of Hosni Mubarak sought a fundamental change to their conditions of poverty, brutal oppression and absence of democratic rights. Mubarak was ousted. But what the working people and the oppressed got was not a revolution but a new political face on the same system of capitalist oppression—first under the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), then the elected Morsi presidency and now back to direct military rule. As we wrote following the 2011 ouster of the Mubarak regime:

> "We Marxists reject this bankrupt reformist framework, which posits that the only two 'choices' for the working class in Egypt are to capitulate either to the 'secular,' military-backed bourgeois nationalist regime or to political Islam. In fact, these are *alternative ways* of propping up capitalist class rule, the system that ensures vast wealth for its rulers and dire poverty for the urban and rural masses. We look instead to the revolutionary mobilization of Egypt's proletariat, standing at the head of all the oppressed, in a fight for socialist revolution, which alone can address the fundamental problems facing the masses."
>
> —"Pandering to Reactionary Muslim Brotherhood"
> (*WV* No. 974, 18 February 2011)

Reuters

July 8: Bodies of Muslim Brotherhood supporters slaughtered by army outside Republican Guard officers club in Cairo five days after coup.

The same armed forces that have been cheered in Tahrir Square rounded up thousands of protesters in 2011, subjecting many to electric shock and other brutal tortures. Tahrir Square's "Street of the Eyes of Freedom" got its moniker after security forces, in a cruel and calculated attack, fired directly into the faces of protesters rallying against SCAF rule. During the Maspero massacre of 9 October 2011, armored military vehicles, in concert with the police and Islamists, mowed down dozens of Coptic Christians protesting the burning of homes and churches. Women protesters detained by the army were subjected to humiliating "virginity tests." Now large numbers of women demonstrators are again being gang-raped and otherwise assaulted under the eyes of the security forces.

Not surprisingly, during the coup U.S. officials were on the phone constantly with their Egyptian counterparts. The Egyptian military is dependent on the $1.3 billion in aid that it receives annually from Washington. General Abdul Fattah el-Sisi, the central figure in the coup (and Morsi's Defense Minister), was trained at the U.S. Army War College and has close relations with American military tops. Washington also made clear to Morsi that his time was up. Using a common reference to the U.S., a Morsi aide texted to an associate shortly before the coup, "Mother just told us that we will stop playing in one hour."

The military—the backbone of all of Egypt's bourgeois regimes, along with the police—has stepped in to put a stop to social turmoil in order to halt the economic collapse, which has affected all but the wealthiest layers of Egyptian society. Government debt has increased by $10 billion in the last two years and the country's foreign currency reserves are rapidly being exhausted. The vital tourist industry has all but collapsed since the initial protests in 2011. The value of the Egyptian pound has plummeted over the past year, while food prices have skyrocketed. Youth unemployment is almost 80 percent.

In the eyes of the capitalists, the only policy to address such a crisis is by taking it out of the hides of working people. While breaking strikes, Morsi's government began to introduce vicious austerity measures against the poor to fulfill the conditions of an IMF loan. The working class can expect nothing less from the SCAF, which has a long, bloody record of repressing labor struggle and political dissent. To this end, the generals are turning once again to veterans of the Mubarak regime. Adli Mansour, a former crony of Mubarak, was named to replace Morsi. Other Mubarak appointees from the so-called "Deep State" have also stepped to the fore to resume governing.

A key task for revolutionary Marxists is combating the widespread nationalist ideology that is evident among the protesters waving Egyptian flags and embracing the army, and even police, as their allies. Anti-Morsi crowds chanted, "The people and the police are one hand" while battling Brotherhood supporters last week. Even the *New York Times* (6 July) called it "a curious sight since the police had been widely detested for killing protesters during the anti-Mubarak uprising." Particularly among the petty bourgeoisie, there is a sentiment to get cops back on the street in the service of "law and order."

Illusions in the army run particularly deep in Egypt, where officers led by Gamal Abdel Nasser overthrew the British-backed monarchy in 1952. Nasser's pretensions to "Arab socialism" notwithstanding, his regime tortured, killed and disappeared hundreds of opponents, including workers and Communists. He was also adept at co-opting Communists and others who pledged allegiance.

During the "Arab Spring" uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt in 2011, we pointed to the working class, whose strikes played a major role in bringing down both despotic regimes, as the potential gravedigger of the bourgeois order. We underlined the urgent need for the proletariat to act as the defender of all the oppressed layers of society, including women, Copts and impoverished peasants. The working class continues to wage economic struggles, as in April when a national train drivers strike paralyzed Egypt's train service for days. However, politically the proletariat remains subordinated to bourgeois forces.

There will be no end to the exploitation of working people, no emancipation of women or liberation of the peasant masses, short of a proletarian revolution that sweeps away the bourgeois state, expropriates the capitalists as a class and proceeds to establish a collectivized economy. There is no nationally limited road to the emancipation of the workers and the oppressed. The powerful Egyptian proletariat can be a leading force in the struggle for a socialist federation of the Near East, part of the fight for proletarian revolution internationally, crucially including the imperialist centers. To bring this perspective to the working class requires the construction of a Leninist vanguard party, which will be forged in political combat against the reformists, liberals and others who seek to subordinate the working class to the imperialists, nationalists and forces of Islamic reaction. ■

AP

October 2011: Mourners in Cairo carry coffins of Coptic Christians slain in Maspero massacre by security forces and the army.

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ites have since tried to bury—based on the argument that the Muslim Brotherhood has "contradictions" that socialists can exploit (see "Cliffites Disappear Their Support to Egypt's Morsi," *WV* No. 1017, 8 February). The RS even bragged about "reaching out to and earning the respect of the most revolutionary wing of the Salafist movement" (jadaliyya.com, 11 May 2012).

It is grotesque that self-declared Marxists would ever support religious fundamentalists, who want to turn the clock back on human progress by some 14 centuries. The RS has insisted that because the Islamists were repressed under Mubarak (who also at times encouraged them), they were allies in the struggle against dictatorship. This is a deadly fallacy: the Islamists—Muslim Brother and Salafist alike—have a long history of murderous violence against trade unionists, Communists, women, Coptic Christians and Jews, not to mention the RS's own members.

Women's liberation requires socialist revolution. By the same token, there will be no revolution except under the leadership of a party that writes on its banner the demand for the emancipation of women. A revolutionary workers party must take up elementary democratic demands such as legal equality for women, equal rights for homosexuals and the separation of religion and state, which Egyptian capitalism has been unable to grant. In order to draw women into the workforce and every other aspect of social life, it is necessary to fight for an end to forced seclusion and the establishment of literacy programs, free 24-hour childcare and free abortion on demand, linked to the struggle for jobs for all.

The Egyptian woman may be hideously oppressed, but she is also a vital part of the class that will lay the basis for her liberation. Women have played a leading role in strikes over the last decade, especially in the textile industry, where they make up 35 percent of the workforce. One of the biggest of the strikes, at the historically combative Mahalla textile plant, was launched in December 2006 by women who walked out as the men continued working. Protesting outside the plant, they started chanting, "Where are the men? Here are the women!"

In 1924, seven years after the Bolshevik Revolution, Leon Trotsky observed in a speech to the Communist University for Toilers of the East in Moscow:

> "Even today we can still observe in the East the rule of Islam, of the old prejudices, beliefs and customs but these will more and more turn to dust and ashes.... This, moreover, means that the Eastern woman who is the most paralysed in life, in her habits and in creativity, the slave of the slaves, that she, having at the demand of the new economic relations taken off her cloak will at once feel herself lacking any sort of religious buttress; she will have a passionate thirst to gain new ideas, a new consciousness which will permit her to appreciate her new position in society. And there will be no better communist in the East, no better fighter for the ideas of the revolution and for the ideas of communism than the awakened woman worker."
>
> —*Perspectives and Tasks in the East*, New Park Publications (London), 1973
> [reprinted in "Communism and Women of the East," *Spartacist* (English-language edition) No. 60, Autumn 2007]

[TO BE CONTINUED]

AFP

February 2011: Textile workers in Mansoura in Nile Delta industrial zone demand better conditions.

Turkey...

(continued from page 1)

are constructed in the Kurdish areas. On June 28, security forces fired on protesters in the Diyarbakir province in Kurdistan, killing one man. In Istanbul the next day some 10,000 leftists and Kurds as well as a number of public sector unionists protested this murder.

The protests in Taksim Square reflect the sharp polarization in Turkish society over the Kurdish national question. The pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) was slow to mobilize its supporters, reflecting ambivalence over Erdogan, the PKK's partner in negotiations. Once there, young militants with placards of Öcalan were confronted with flag-waving Turkish chauvinists. The two major bourgeois opposition parties, the Republican People's Party (CHP) and the Nationalist Action Party (MHP), to which the fascistic Gray Wolves are connected, have been trying to take advantage of discontent with Erdogan. The MHP in particular has condemned the government for being too conciliatory to the PKK and the Kurds.

Over the past ten years, per capita gross domestic product increased by 43 percent in real terms, with exports increasing nearly tenfold and foreign direct investment also jumping. Turkey is now the world's 17th-largest economy. However, the country is highly dependent on foreign capital, the withdrawal of which could trigger an economic downturn. While adherence to IMF guidelines, cuts in social spending and massive privatization have benefited a new layer of capitalist entrepreneurs, prosperity and wealth have not trickled down to the Turkish and Kurdish workers and peasants. The minimum wage for workers remains at 773 Turkish lira, or $395 per month, with a six-day workweek. Many workers labor 70 hours a week for even less pay in the "gray market" that accounts for a third of the Turkish economy. The official jobless rate is near 9 percent. Youth unemployment is over 20 percent.

Turkey has a significant industrial proletariat. But less than 10 percent of the workforce is unionized, reflecting the massive defeat inflicted on the workers movement by a 1980 military coup and three subsequent decades of heavy repression. This May Day, unions tried to organize a rally at Taksim Square, but a heavy police presence and use of tear gas prevented it from going ahead. After the current wave of protests broke out several weeks later, two union federations—the Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions (DISK) and the Confederation of Public Workers Unions (KESK)—called a solidarity strike, which the largest union federation refused to honor. But DISK and KESK limited themselves to endorsing the demands of the Taksim Solidarity Committee, such as freeing the detainees and halting the development of Gezi Park. One KESK official stated that "unions shouldn't occupy a role as if they are the teachers or the leaders. We have to simply be part of it." This is effectively a statement that the working class—the only class with the potential to overturn the capitalist order—must remain simply a subordinate component of the trans-class popular opposition to the AKP regime.

Various pseudo-Marxists are hailing a "Turkish Spring," calling to "Turn Taksim Square into [Cairo's] Tahrir Square!" This is both factually misleading and politically dim. The main outcome of the "Arab Spring" was to strengthen the forces of political Islam, which were entrusted in Tunisia and Egypt (as well as Libya, courtesy of NATO bombs and missiles) with carrying out capitalist austerity against the workers and the poor. The leaders of the protests in Tahrir Square have oscillated between supporting the Islamists and hailing the army officers, while workers remain ground down and women enslaved. The protesters in Turkey have been explicitly opposing an Islamist government that has been in power for over a decade.

This rejection of creeping Islamization is positive. But it does not address the class divisions in society. The proletariat must come forward to lead all the oppressed in the struggle against capitalist rule. If the proletariat is to prevail as an independent aspirant to power, it has to be broken from religious reaction, Turkish chauvinism and all forms of nationalism. This requires the leadership of a multinational Leninist vanguard party, forged from the advanced workers and revolutionary intellectuals.

Reuters

June 8: Kurds in central Istanbul hold photos of family members killed by Turkish state's repression of Kurdistan Workers Party guerrillas. Some 40,000 Kurds have been slaughtered since 1984.

Legacy of Atatürk

There were heated disputes at the Gezi Park protests over Kemal Atatürk, the founding leader of the modern Turkish state following the post-World War I dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. Chants of "Freedom for Öcalan" were counterposed to shouts of "We are Atatürk's soldiers."

Atatürk is a controversial figure, whose legacy means different things to different people. Acting as the vanguard of the nascent Turkish bourgeoisie, the Kemalists introduced a series of reforms designed to develop Turkey as a modern capitalist nation-state. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his Republican People's Party inherited an economically backward country without concentrated modern industry. The small capitalist class in those days was Armenian and Greek, with a small Jewish component. The Kemalists proclaimed the country a secular republic and abolished the caliphate (office of Islamic ruler). Islam ceased to be the state religion, and *sharia* law was replaced by a constitution based on the Swiss civil code and (Mussolini's) Italian penal code. Polygamy was abolished, and religious brotherhoods and orders were outlawed. Religious symbols—the veil in schools and public institutions, and the fez everywhere—were banned. (See "Turkey: Women and the Permanent Revolution," *WV* No. 916, 6 June 2008.)

Presidency of the Republic of Turkey

Kemal Atatürk introducing Westernized Turkish alphabet, 1928, as part of attempt to modernize Turkey.

Atatürk was a modernizing nationalist who thought he could transport the country from the Middle Ages into the 20th century with a few strokes of the pen. His reforms were necessarily partial, imposed from above in a backward country that was 80 percent rural. There were no attempts at land reform or expropriation of the large landowners. Although the caliphate was abolished, a real separation of state and mosque was never carried through. Instead, the religious hierarchy was put under state control by means of the Directorate of Religious Affairs.

Urban women, especially those of the ruling class, certainly benefited from the Kemalist reforms. However, the lives of the overwhelming majority of women, especially in the backward, conservative countryside, changed little. Democratic gains that Western women take for granted, such as the right to choose a marriage partner, are not available to many Turkish women. This experience shows in the negative the limitations of bourgeois reforms: the oppression of women, rooted in the institution of the family, is brutally reinforced by the pronounced poverty, inequality and economic scarcity of Turkish society.

The Kurdish National Question

The Turkish republic was founded in 1923 following a fierce war that defeated the imperialists, notably Britain, and their allies, who had sought to carve up what became modern Turkey. To build the national capitalist state, the Kemalist movement used Turkish nationalism as a weapon. The Armenians—victims of a genocidal massacre in World War I—were mainly driven from the country, as were the Greeks, and the Jews were subjected to pogromist violence.

Soon after its inception, the Turkish state sought to forcibly assimilate the Kurdish population and destroy its separate national identity. Speaking and publishing in the Kurdish language were banned, and the constitution codified the Kemalist doctrine that Turkey was strictly Turkish. Eventually Kurds were defined as "mountain Turks." In the early 1960s, the government enacted a law to change Kurdish place names into Turkish ones. State repression skyrocketed, particularly with the onset of military clashes with the PKK in the mid 1980s, and tens of thousands of Kurds were locked away in Turkish jails.

The military destroyed thousands of Kurdish villages, killing tens of thousands and prompting massive population transfers. Today a majority of the roughly 15 million Kurds in Turkey live in the western cities; one estimate holds that there are three million Kurds in Istanbul alone. According to a study by the Konda research institute, almost a quarter of Kurds living in Istanbul reside in one of the city's slums. For cities in the Mediterranean's easternmost regions, for example Mersin and Antalya, the figure is 72 percent, in Izmir just under 60 percent. The study also shows that nearly a third of Kurds of working age are unemployed, while 27 percent of Kurds are excluded from the social security systems.

Kurdistan itself is largely an economic backwater, consisting overwhelmingly of hideously downtrodden peasants and landless sharecroppers under the heels of the Kurdish landed gentry, the Sunni clergy and the Turkish military. But partly as a result of the scorched-earth tactics pursued by the army, a Kurdish proletariat was created, taking part in integrated class struggle in both western Europe and Turkey.

In the Zonguldak miners strike in 1991, Turkish and Kurdish miners fought side by side for days. One of their demands was for an end to U.S. imperialism's "Desert Storm" war against Iraq. In the winter of 2009-10, Kurdish and Turkish workers waged a courageous strike when Tekel, the former state tobacco monopoly, was privatized and sold to British American Tobacco, resulting in the closing of 12 factories. Some 12,000 workers from around the country descended on Ankara in support of the dismissed workers, braving near-freezing temperatures to hold a sit-in at a central park. The state reacted with brute force as police beat and pepper-sprayed workers and arrested their leaders. The strike drew nationwide support, with 100,000 workers marching in solidarity. Although the union tops eventually sabotaged the strike, this battle demonstrated that nationalist divisions in the working class can be overcome in common class struggle.

The Kurdish people constitute the largest nation in the world without a state. Kurdistan extends from eastern Turkey and a portion of Syria through northern Iraq and into Iran. As Marxists who champion the equality of nations and combat all manifestations of national chauvinism, we emphasize that the rights of the Kurdish people can be won only by smashing the four capitalist states that oppress them. This perspective requires the interlinking of revolutionary struggles throughout the region as well as unconditional opposition to any imperialist intervention. As we explained in "Trotskyism vs. PKK Nationalism" (*WV* No. 716, 9 July 1999), that task requires the instrumentality of Leninist-Trotskyist parties that unite the working people of different national and ethnic backgrounds.

To win the confidence of the Kurdish working masses, such parties must demonstrate their opposition to all forms of anti-Kurdish chauvinism, for example, championing full and equal rights for the Kurdish language. Without giving political support to the PKK, proletarian revolutionaries in Turkey would side with that organization when it is engaged in military conflict with the bourgeois state. Defending the right of self-determination for the Kurdish people, i.e., the right to set up its own state, is a fundamental obligation for communists in Turkey.

In contradistinction, a June 4 statement of the Communist Party of Turkey (TKP) central committee wallows in Turkish chauvinism, claiming that the Turkish flag is now a "flag in the hands of patriotic people." The Kurds have been perse-

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cuted, locked up and massacred for years by patriotic Turkish flag-wavers simply for calling themselves Kurds. Further, the TKP claims that "Kurdish politics" must "become a strong constituent of a united, patriotic, and enlightened working people's movement." And what if, contrary to the TKP's Turkish patriotism, the Kurds choose to set up their own state? Such an option is not admitted by the TKP. Nor are these wretched politics new: the TKP has given support to the virulently anti-Kurdish CHP as an alternative to other bourgeois parties.

Marxists strongly oppose the petty-bourgeois nationalist program of the PKK. While the PKK has indeed waged a heroic military struggle against the far better equipped Turkish army, it rejects the need for proletarian revolution and writes off the Turkish working class. Thus, the PKK can only maneuver with various factions of the Turkish bourgeoisie as well as launch futile appeals to the European and American imperialists to intervene on its behalf.

Adapting its demands to what it hopes will be acceptable to the Turkish bourgeoisie, the PKK today does not call for independence for the Kurds. Instead it calls for autonomy, expecting to get more language and cultural rights as a part of the Turkish state. But regional autonomy under capitalism means that decisive power remains in the hands of the national state. Even if such an agreement were to be reached, it will be the Turkish bourgeois state and its army that will be in the driver's seat and will ultimately determine exactly what rights Kurds do and do not get. This will never lead to national liberation for the Kurds.

It is only through revolutionary proletarian internationalist struggle—forging unity among the Kurdish, Turkish, Arab and Iranian working masses—that victory is possible. We call for a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan, part of a socialist federation of the Near East. This is a concrete expression of the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution. In countries of belated capitalist development, the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolutions achieved long ago in the West cannot be solved within a capitalist framework. The crucial need to modernize these areas, carry out agrarian revolution, resolve the national oppression of the Kurds and other minorities and achieve elementary rights for women requires that the working class, supported by the peasantry, take power. In order to survive and flourish, socialist revolution in the backward countries must be extended to the advanced capitalist states of Europe, the U.S. and Japan, whose economic, technological and scientific technique is essential to raise the semicolonial world to the economic level of the West on the way to achieving a socialist society based on material abundance.

Political Islam in Turkey

As the Turkish people became disappointed with "secular" nationalist governments, successive regimes played the religious card. In fact, the Kemalist generals gave direct encouragement to the Islamists. In the late 1960s and 1970s there were hundreds of thousands of leftists in Turkey. In response, the generals encouraged the growth of clerical reaction. After a military coup in 1971, the authorities did not arrest the then leader of the political Islamists, Necmettin Erbakan, unlike the leaders of leftist parties. Erbakan rose from obscurity, taking part in two coalition governments in the 1970s as deputy prime minister. Nevertheless, as documented by a Pew Research report released in April, just over a tenth of the country's population supports making *sharia* the law of the land, compared to three-fourths of Muslims in Egypt.

After the 1980 military coup, the generals provided a further spur to Islamization, introducing such measures as compulsory religious instruction in state schools, training more imams and opening scores of religious academies. As Stephen Kinzer put it in his book *Crescent and Star* (2001), "The dour generals who seized power in September 1980 hoped to use Islam as a counterweight to secular liberal and radical ideologies that were gaining strength in Turkey." After deadlocked elections in 1995, Erbakan became prime minister in a coalition government. Once in office, he ostentatiously thumbed his nose at the generals, denounced the West and solidarized with the Iranian theocracy. Erbakan was forced to resign in 1997, and his Welfare Party was banned from politics. Although Erbakan was sentenced to prison, he was amnestied and served no time. But fellow Islamist Erdogan was convicted of subversion and jailed for four months.

Although they suffered a setback, the Islamists were not crushed. In 2002, Erdogan's AKP was elected to office. Erdogan was careful to cultivate an image as a "moderate" Islamist and a "democrat." He pushed Turkey's application to join the European Union (EU) and enacted some minor reforms in Kurdistan, allowing use of Kurdish in private—but not state—schools and very limited Kurdish language radio broadcasts. This played well in the West and won high praise from various bourgeois pundits.

Meanwhile, Erdogan was going after his enemies among the Kemalist generals, recognizing that they were a threat to consolidating his authority. Using the courts and other institutions, he gradually purged the officer corps. Thus in Turkey the army is now subordinated to the Islamists. This is manifestly different from the situation in Egypt.

Reuters

Karsan automotive factory in western Turkey builds buses in partnership with Italian company, 2011. Turkish proletariat, with significant Kurdish component, must be broken from bourgeois nationalism, religious reaction.

AP

February 24: German chancellor Angela Merkel at base in southeastern Turkey with NATO-deployed Patriot surface-to-air missile system.

As Erdogan became more secure in his position, he increasingly geared up the repressive machinery of the state against anyone who appeared to be an opponent. By 2005, the AKP government had stepped up military repression in Kurdistan, leading the PKK to end its five-year cease-fire. Turkey also began bombing PKK camps in Iraq. Meanwhile, "anti-terror" laws have been used to persecute thousands of union activists, students, lawyers, journalists and university teachers.

Under Erdogan, one of the most infamous provisions in the Turkish constitution, Article 301, was "reformed" so that now it is a crime to insult the Turkish nation as opposed to insulting "Turkishness"—a distinction with absolutely no difference. In October 2005, Armenian-Turkish journalist Hrant Dink was given a six-month suspended sentence under Article 301 for writing about the 1915 massacre of Armenians. Dink was assassinated by a Turkish nationalist for whom Article 301 was a passport to murder. Several dozen members of the teachers union Egitim Sen, which has an honorable record of defending the right to education in one's own language, were detained for months on bogus charges under anti-terrorism legislation and still face charges.

Erdogan has embarked on a massive building program, often with the theme of celebrating Ottoman times. An example is the shopping mall complex designed to supplant Gezi Park, with an artillery barracks of that period and a mosque. Developers have targeted poorer inner-city neighborhoods, driving Kurds, Roma (Gypsies) and others to slums beyond the city limits.

The Islamist regime has also stepped up provocations against the Alevi minority. Composing up to 25 percent of the population, the Alevis are an unorthodox offshoot of Shi'ite Islam who are seen as advocates of secularism and are disproportionately represented on the left. Alevi men and women worship together; women are not covered. Alevis do not fast during Ramadan and do not normally pray in mosques or accept the Koran as a source of jurisprudence. The government is naming a third bridge being built over the Bosphorus after the Ottoman ruler Yavuz Sultan Selim. Known as Selim the Grim because of his cruelty, he massacred tens of thousands of Alevis in the 16th century. Predictably the naming of the bridge outraged the Alevis. Considered heretics by Sunni traditionalists, they continue to be targeted today.

Turkey's Regional Ambitions

Turkey remains, as it has been for many decades, a staunch ally of the Western imperialists. Bordering on the former Soviet Union, it served as a valuable listening post for the U.S. after World War II. A staunch NATO ally, Turkey dispatched troops to fight alongside the imperialists in the Korean War. While the U.S. is the largest military supporter of Turkey, the Turkish capitalists are economically dependent on German imperialism, exporting more to that country than anywhere else. Germany has also trained and drilled Turkish military death squads deployed in Kurdistan.

After coming to power, Erdogan heavily pushed the virtues of the European Union, portraying membership as the road to economic prosperity. The International Communist League has consistently opposed the EU, which is an imperialist cartel whose purpose is to enforce austerity on European workers and to act as a tool for the larger powers, particularly Germany, to exploit weaker, dependent capitalist states. The gloss has long since worn off the EU, especially in light of the grinding capitalist economic crisis. The rapidly worsening living conditions in Europe, particularly in Spain, Greece, Cyprus and elsewhere in the EU's southern rim, demonstrate that talk of the "growing together" of Europe has nothing to do with raising poorer countries to the level of richer nations but rather enables increased capitalist exploitation.

While many Kurds have expressed illusions that the EU would defend minority rights, the fact is that EU states have viciously persecuted immigrants and ethnic minorities, such as the Basques in Spain and France and the Catholics in Northern Ireland. Moreover, both the U.S. and the EU have banned the PKK as a "terrorist organization." The ICL demands freedom for Öcalan and opposes the banning of the PKK. We have also called for defense of Turkish Guevarists, such as the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front (DHKP-C), and other leftists persecuted as part of the "anti-terrorism" witchhunt.

It is highly questionable whether the racist and bigoted European rulers would ever grant EU membership to a large, overwhelmingly Muslim country like Turkey, whose citizens would have the right to travel and work in EU states. In any event, the EU continues to put up new obstacles to Turkey's entry. With the AKP's goal of EU entry stalled, Erdogan's "neo-Ottomanism" has put particular stress on developing influence where the Sultanate once held sway or where Turkic languages are spoken, an area stretching from Bosnia in the Balkans to the Near East and Central Asia. While Europe remains Turkey's largest trade partner, from 2002 to 2010 trade with the Gulf states increased fivefold and with Egypt sevenfold. Receiving foreign capital investment from the Persian Gulf states, Turkey's construction companies as well as food and textile concerns have in turn invested in the rest of the Near East.

Erdogan's Turkey has lined up with the Sunni Arab states and the Western imperialists in a bloc whose principal target is Shi'ite Iran. Thus the AKP government

continued on page 10

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BART Strike...

(continued from page 12)

union ranks had voted overwhelmingly to authorize strike action. A united strike with the BART workers would not even have meant doing anything "illegal," the trade-union bureaucracy's longstanding alibi for not fighting. It required nothing more than adherence to what was once a labor principle—No Contract, No Work! But the leadership of ATU Local 192, which organizes workers at AC Transit, not only kept their members on the job but gave BART bosses a helping hand by agreeing to work extra buses to take people across the Bay! BART management was counting on such assistance to undermine the strike.

There were plenty of bus drivers enraged by this dirty deal, who knew all too well that their heads are also on the chopping block. All it would have taken to shut it down was BART workers setting up picket lines at the AC Transit bus barns and other central bus terminals. But for the union tops, this would be against the rules, i.e., the strikebreaking laws of the bosses' government. Pickets of BART drivers and station agents were dispatched to stations where scab shuttles had been organized by management—not to shut them down but to impotently appeal to riders.

Picket lines are not some kind of "moral witness" or public relations ploy. They are battle lines in the class struggle between the workers and the capitalists who derive their profits from the exploitation of labor. Their success is predicated on the consciousness and organization of the workers mobilized against their class enemy. If the BART strike had been fought on such terms, it could have ignited some real labor solidarity by other unionized transit systems, from regional buses, trains and ferries to S.F. Muni transit workers, whose current contract was imposed on them by an arbitrator after they had defiantly voted down three other sellouts. To wage such a struggle calls for a leadership that will take on the capitalists and their political parties, not bow before them and call off the fight.

WV Photo

July 3: ATU picketers at BART stop in El Cerrito.

The Allies and the Enemies of Labor

Throughout the strike, the bosses' hired media pens and newscasters orchestrated a union-hating outcry against "greedy" BART workers, weeping crocodile tears for the plight of the "hard-working" public. The bureaucrats in turn stoked fears that the strike was igniting public outrage. But the "public" is not an undifferentiated mass. Sure, the well-heeled professionals employed in San Francisco's financial district and commercial and high-tech industries let loose with a barrage of class hatred and barely concealed racist contempt for the highly integrated BART workforce. But on the other side of the "public" are workers and poor people who have lost their jobs, homes and meager social benefits in the economic disaster created by the speculative binges of the Wall Street bankers and corporate magnates. Among those suffering under the same budget-cutting ax as the BART workers, there was some real sympathy with the unions.

As V.I. Lenin, whose Bolshevik Party led the Russian working class to power in the 1917 October Revolution, wrote in "Economic and Political Strikes" (May 1912): "Whereas the liberals (and the liquidators) tell the workers: 'You are strong when you have the sympathy of "society",' the Marxist tells the workers something different, namely: 'You have the sympathy of "society" when you are strong'." Here were unions with the social power to deal a blow against the greed of the obscenely wealthy capitalists on behalf of all labor. A hard-fought class battle, including demands addressed to the needs of the poor, black people, immigrants and others—like free mass transit and free, quality health care for all—could have won plenty of allies among the many who have been thrown under the bus by the bosses.

But the trade-union bureaucrats look for "friends" in the camp of the class enemy, including the cops who serve as the armed enforcers of capitalist rule. The BART police who shot down Oscar Grant, a young, unarmed black man, in cold blood on New Year's Day in 2009, are embraced as "union brothers." And their job is not just terrorizing and gunning down minority youth and others on the trains but policing the workforce for management. In the current negotiations, BART management is demanding that its cops be deployed to investigate workers for even the most minor workplace infractions, including tracking them down at their homes. BART cops are the thugs who would have been cracking heads on the picket lines had there been any violation of the bosses' strikebreaking laws. ***Police, prison guards and security guards have no place in the workers movement—they are on the other side! Caps out of the unions!***

AP

January 2009: Protest against shooting death by BART cop of Oscar Grant in Oakland.

The union misleaders' embrace of the cops and subordination to the Democratic Party are born of the lie that the workers and their exploiters share common interests, a lie that is at the heart of the virtually unchallenged offensive by the capitalists and their state that has gutted the unions in this country. The leaders of the BART unions urged members to pressure the Board of Directors, arguing that since they are elected they could be pressured to take the side of the workers. In fact, the whole purpose of this board is to oversee BART on behalf of the capitalist class, not for the benefit of the workers.

For Class-Struggle Leadership!

Four years ago, the BART union leaders traded away more than $100 million in cuts to the wages, benefits and working conditions of their members. This deal was foisted on the ranks in the name of doing "their share" to bail management out of a supposed budget shortfall. With BART now forecasting a $125 million per year budget surplus for the next ten years, it was argued that the workers should be rewarded for their sacrifice.

But it doesn't work that way. This system is based on production for profit. Increasing those profits means driving down the cost of labor and slashing even the pittance that has gone to providing for those who have been thrown on the scrapheap because they can no longer be profitably employed. Under capitalism, this is a constant and ongoing war, in "good times" as in bad. The only thing that alters that calculus is class struggle, i.e., when the workers withdraw their labor and cut off the flow of profits, mobilizing their allies behind them.

The unions are elementary defense organizations of the working class against unbridled exploitation. The purpose of union leadership should be to lead their ranks in struggle. Instead, the union bureaucrats act like labor-management consultants keeping labor "peace" while begging for a few crumbs. If the unions are to be organizations of struggle, there must be a fight against the misleaders who have tied the class interests of the workers to those of their exploiters and their political parties.

What is needed is to forge a new leadership of the unions that will arm the workers with a program of class struggle, fighting for their own interests and for the cause of black freedom, immigrant rights and the defense of all the oppressed. This in turn will be part of building a multiracial revolutionary workers party whose purpose is not only to defend the working class against the menace of its devastation but to rid the planet of the source of that scourge, capitalism itself, and the state that preserves it. In its place, a victorious workers government will found a new social order based on a planned socialist economy organized for the benefit of society as a whole. ■

Turkey...

(continued from page 9)

sides with the Syrian rebels against the bonapartist regime of Bashar al-Assad, an Iranian ally. A conduit for arms to the rebels, Turkey successfully pushed for stationing NATO Patriot missiles on its soil. However, Erdogan's war course is deeply unpopular in Turkey, with widespread fears that the country may become militarily involved. As Marxists, we say that both sides in the communally based Syrian civil war are deeply reactionary enemies of the working class. But in the event that the U.S. and/or European powers launch a military attack on Syria, working people internationally must stand with Syria against the imperialist forces.

Turkey has substantial relations with the Kurdistan Regional Government in northern Iraq, where Turkish firms have the vast bulk of construction contracts. Iraqi Kurdistan is now a semi-autonomous enclave whose protected status is largely due to the support it has gotten from U.S. imperialism. Oil is about to flow from newly exploited fields in Iraqi Kurdistan via pipeline to Turkey, angering Iraq's majority Shi'ite government, which complains that it is not getting a fair share of the revenues. Meanwhile, many of the PKK's fighters have migrated to Iraqi Kurdistan. Should fighting break out again between Turkey and the PKK, the pro-American Iraqi Kurdish leaders could well hunt down PKK militants, as they have done in the past.

There is a long history of mutual backstabbing among rival Kurdish nationalist groups pursuing advantages with the imperialists or one or another regional capitalist state. We stressed during the U.S. occupation of Iraq that "any fight for Kurdish independence that does not take as its starting point opposition to the occupation and to the nationalist parties that serve it will necessarily be subordinated to the occupation" ("The U.S. Occupation and the Kurdish Question," *WV* No. 871, 26 May 2006). The article continued:

> "As part of the multinational proletariat of the Near East, Kurdish workers can play a leading role in bringing down the rotten structure set up to serve the imperialist overlords. Kurdish and Turkish workers in Europe, especially in Germany, can serve as a living bridge linking the Kurdish struggle for independence to the fight for socialist revolution in the Near East and the advanced capitalist countries of West Europe."

This struggle requires the leadership of internationalist workers parties forged in opposition to all bourgeois forces and all forms of religious reaction. ■

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Supreme Court...

(continued from page 12)

action—also a gain, however minimal, of the civil rights movement. The case was kicked back to a lower court for consideration under a new standard that will make it even harder for universities to consider race in admissions. The ongoing racist purge of higher education and skyrocketing tuition costs cry out for a fight for free, quality, racially integrated education for everyone, through the university level.

These judicial feats turning back the clock have been very easy to carry out. Why? Time and again, the capitalist Democratic Party politicians who pass for leaders of the black masses have diverted justified anger back into electoral politics, as have the bureaucrats atop the trade unions. The resulting low ebb in social and class struggle has put wind in the sails of the decades-long effort to roll back the gains of the civil rights movement, not to mention the ongoing war on labor that has hit black workers, most recently in the public-sector unions, especially hard. Historically comprising a reserve army of labor to be maintained, albeit minimally, for the American bourgeoisie, today the black ghetto poor are increasingly considered to be an expendable population.

It is crucial to defend voting rights and every other gain for black people, other minorities and the working class. Depriving the oppressed of basic democratic rights is a declaration that it is open season on them. At the same time, a serious defense of those rights would involve mobilizing not votes for "lesser evil" representatives of the class enemy but rather mass struggles against the racist capitalist rulers. Such a fight for the rights of the oppressed would prove a powerful leaven to the class struggle of the working class as a whole.

Racial Oppression—Bedrock of U.S. Capitalism

Following the defeat of the South in the Civil War, the former slaves were liberated—codified in the Thirteenth Amendment abolishing slavery—and extended such basic rights as the right to vote and hold office. This period of Radical Reconstruction was the most democratic in American history, with black rights enforced in the South at rifle-point by the interracial Union Army. Among the measures adopted were the Fourteenth Amendment—which conferred citizenship on "all persons born or naturalized in the United States," an important protection for immigrants as well—and the Fifteenth Amendment.

Ultimately, though, the Northern bourgeoisie in pursuit of its class interests went on to betray Reconstruction, making common cause with Southern landholders to ensure the maintenance of private property in the means of production. This turn was exemplified by the Compromise of 1877, after which Union troops were ordered back to their barracks, opening the road for Jim Crow to ride in on the Klansman's horse. The black population, although not returned to slavery, was solidified as a specially oppressed race-color caste.

With the mass migration of blacks from the South to the industrial cities of the North—initially around the time of World War I—the bourgeoisie increasingly fostered anti-black racism, making the color bar a dividing line that has served to obscure the fundamental *class* divide in society. To this day, racist poison plays a central role in blocking the development of class consciousness in the American proletariat. As a result, the U.S. is the only industrial country where the workers have not had their own independent political party, even a reformist one. The legacy of black chattel slavery is behind much in the U.S. political system that is anti-democratic, e.g., the Senate, which is designed to favor less populous rural and Southern regions by granting each state equal representation.

Mears/Detroit News

October 2009: 50,000 crowd Detroit's Cobo Center for 5,000 applications for federal aid to help pay rent and utilities.

Although the courageous struggles of the civil rights foot soldiers were instrumental in ending Jim Crow, the bourgeoisie had its own reasons for acquiescing. The system of legal segregation in the South had become outdated with the mechanization of agriculture and the growth of a black proletariat in the region. It was also a blemish on the U.S. image abroad. In countering American bourgeois propaganda that praised the virtues of "democracy," the Soviet Union made hay of scenes of police dogs mauling and truncheons pummeling black men, women and children in the South. As Louis Menand related in the *New Yorker* (8 July): "American Presidents were trying to run a Cold War. They could live with Jim Crow when it was an invisible regional peculiarity, but once conditions were broadcast around the world they experienced an urgent need to make the problem go away."

The strategy of Martin Luther King and other liberal civil rights leaders was to appeal to the "conscience" of the capitalist rulers, pinning their hopes on the beneficence of their courts and the Democratic Party in Washington. The ruling class was willing to make concessions in the sphere of democratic rights. But it would not and could not redress the abject material conditions besetting the black masses. The civil rights movement met its defeat when it came North, where it confronted the conditions of black impoverishment and oppression woven into the fabric of American capitalism: rat-infested slums, crumbling schools, mass unemployment and rampant cop terror.

The great Marxist revolutionary Leon Trotsky, co-leader with V.I. Lenin of the 1917 Russian Revolution that brought the proletariat to power, described this dynamic in his 1922 report "The Position of the Republic and the Tasks of Young Workers":

> "The bourgeoisie makes concessions to the working class: universal suffrage, social and factory legislation, national insurance, the shortening of the working day. The bourgeoisie makes a retreat step by step; where necessary it grants a reform; when possible it puts on the pressure again and then makes a retreat. Why? It is manoeuvring; the ruling class is fighting for its rule, for the exploitation of the other class. Of course the reformists suppose that bit by bit they will remake the bourgeois system into a socialist one. And we reply to this: rubbish!—while power is in the hands of the bourgeoisie they will measure out each reform but they know up to what point they can grant a reform. And just for this purpose they have the power in their hands."

What the bourgeoisie grants it also can take away. As the chipping away at the gains of the civil rights movement shows, reforms under capitalism are eminently reversible. The same is true for gay rights, now widely considered on firmer footing after another five-to-four Supreme Court ruling last month that declared unconstitutional a key provision of the anti-gay federal Defense of Marriage Act signed into law by Bill Clinton in 1996. That decision came amid increasing support among the bourgeoisie and more widely in society for extending to same-sex couples the institution of marriage—one of the means by which the ruling class exerts social control.

The only way to win social equality is to put an end to the capitalist system of exploitation. With black people historically a vital part of the American economy while at the same time in the mass forcibly segregated at its bottom, we advance the program of revolutionary integrationism. Fighting against all forms of discrimination and segregation, we understand that the liberation of black people can be achieved only through integration into an egalitarian socialist society. This perspective is counterposed to both liberal integrationism, which holds that black equality can be achieved within the confines of American capitalism, and black nationalism, which despairs of the possibility of overcoming racial divisions through united class struggle.

Liberalism and the American Nightmare

Adding a heavy dollop of cynicism to its reactionary ruling, the Supreme Court directed Congress to come up with a new, improved method of pre-clearance, well aware that lawmakers are unlikely to agree to any standard. But if you believe the NAACP and other liberal types, it is time to appeal to the "better angels" among the Congressional Republicans. Democratic Party mouthpiece Al Sharpton—one of the organizers of the August 24 "National Action to Realize the Dream" events commemorating the 50th anniversary of the 1963 March on Washington—has pledged to "mobilize nationwide to put the pressure on Congress to come up with stricter voter protection laws."

The predictable reaction of top officials of the unions, many of which have endorsed the August 24 events, is to similarly preach faith in the politicians who look after the interests of racist American capitalism. In his statement on the Voting Rights Act decision, AFL-CIO head Richard Trumka declared: "We call on Congress with leadership from President Obama to live up to the ideals of our democracy by protecting and ensuring the right to vote for all." "Our" democracy is a society where the capitalist exploiters call the shots, offering up the electoral shell game to mask their class dictatorship. Barack Obama, the first black man elected president, took office at a time when the ruling class sought an effective Commander-in-Chief after the Bush-Cheney years, one who could sell the lie that rapacious U.S. imperialism was a bastion of democracy. He has delivered for them, advancing such American "ideals" as shredding democratic rights and expanding the surveillance state, pursuing the Afghanistan occupation and Libya bombing, deporting masses of immigrants and launching a crusade against teachers unions.

The real game for Sharpton, Trumka & Co. is to bolster the fortunes of the Democratic Party. Racist voter suppression impacts black, Latino and student populations that in the main vote for the Democrats. As such, it is advantageous for the Republicans to carry out a naked assault on voting rights, although this backfired in 2012 when the black voter turnout rate was higher than that of whites, impelled in part by outrage over attempts to suppress the vote.

The outright bigotry of the Republican Party allows the Democrats to take for granted support from black people, and in the recent past it has also thrown a lot more Latino votes in their direction. As Malcolm X once wrote: "'Conservatism' in America's politics means 'Let's keep the n---ers in their place.' And 'liberalism' means 'Let's keep the *knee*-grows in their place—but tell them we'll treat them a little better; let's fool them more, with more promises.'" Although he lacked a revolutionary working-class perspective, Malcolm was a scathing truth-teller, pointedly referring to the original March on Washington as the "Farce on Washington."

Chattel slavery was abolished on the battlefields of the Civil War, the Second American Revolution. But a lot of unfinished business remains. It will take a Third American Revolution to do away with the system of wage slavery in which the oppression of black people is materially rooted. To this end, workers and the black masses must be broken from the grip of the Democratic Party. Workers need their own party, a revolutionary party capable of leading the struggle for an egalitarian socialist society, ushering in the dawn of black freedom. ■

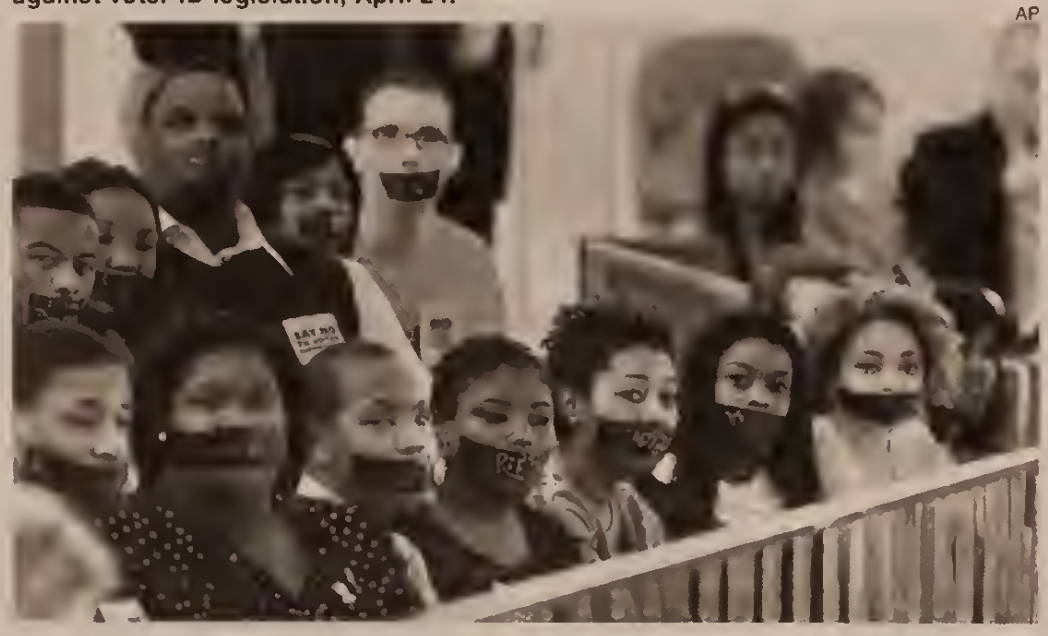
AP photos

Above: Black youth in Selma, Alabama, protest at courthouse demanding voting rights, February 1965. Below: Liberal civil rights leader Martin Luther King and others meet with Democratic president John F. Kennedy following March on Washington, August 1963.

WORKERS VANGUARD

Gutting the Voting Rights Act

Washington Post



AP

Voting rights decision by Supreme Court gives green light to states' efforts to suppress minority votes. Below: NAACP student chapters demonstrate in Raleigh, N.C., against voter ID legislation, April 24.

"Our country has changed," wrote Supreme Court Chief Justice Roberts in the majority decision striking down the section of the 1965 Voting Rights Act that gives it teeth. In a five-to-four ruling, the Court effectively found its "pre-clearance" provision, i.e., prior approval from the Justice Department to fiddle with voting rules, too onerous for those states subject to it.

The gutting of the Voting Rights Act, which in its own words was meant to "enforce the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution," is nothing but a punch in the face to black people. Part of the legal consolidation of the democratic gains that black people won, gun in hand, in the Civil War, the Fifteenth Amendment granted the right to vote regardless of "race, color, or previous condition of servitude." But following the defeat of Reconstruction, it became a dead letter in the states of the old Confederacy, which employed poll taxes, literacy tests and other dirty tricks—backed up by the lynch-rope terror of the Ku Klux Klan and local police (often intertwined)—to keep black people from casting their ballots. It took a mass movement, and no small sacrifice of lives, to crush Jim Crow segregation in the South and wrest reforms such as the Voting Rights Act from the ruling class.

Signaling how little racist capitalist America has changed, the states that had fallen under federal oversight celebrated the Supreme Court decision by immediately gearing up their machinery of voter suppression. Texas, Alabama, Mississippi, South Carolina and Virginia rushed to implement new voter ID laws that will redound against not just black people but many others at the bottom of society—Latinos, the poor, the elderly. In Arizona, where authorities have gone to great lengths to one-up the Obama administration's anti-immigrant crackdown, state attorney general Tom Horne railed that the Voting Rights Act "humiliates Arizona by making it say 'Mother may I' to the federal government every time it wants to change some remarkably minor laws." Meanwhile, North Carolina and other states are moving to drastically cut early voting and eliminate same-day registration.

The Court's ruling should come as no surprise. Chief Justice Roberts is but one of those on the Court who were schooled in the legal doctrine of "strict constructionism," which in plain English means rolling back rights that black people and others have gained through struggle. Roberts has been devoted to this pursuit since his days as a Justice Department lawyer under Ronald Reagan. Commenting on Roberts' and Samuel J. Alito's confirmation hearings, we observed: "Theirs is not a mere 'judicial philosophy' but the expression in the legal/judicial realm of the call that the 'South will rise again'" (*WV* No. 864, 17 February 2006). For Senate Democrats at the time, the reactionary views of these Bush nominees were not an issue. Despite Democrats' rancor over the Voting Rights Act decision, Barack Obama and his party have done their part to downplay the enduring character of racial oppression, not least through Obama's much-lauded comment in 2008 that the civil rights movement took black people "90 percent of the way" to full equality.

The reality is that by every measure—employment, income, housing, education—the yawning gap between white and black America persists to this day. Nearly 50 years after the passage of the Voting Rights Act, black people are still blown away on the streets of this country simply for their appearance, as was 17-year-old Trayvon Martin last year. Today his vigilante killer is on trial, but only because nationwide protest prompted his arrest. Across the country, the police routinely stop, frisk, beat and jail black youth, although not to the satisfaction of NYC mayor Michael Bloomberg, who recently lamented that "we disproportionately stop whites too much and minorities too little." Mass incarceration has left some 13 percent of black men with felony convictions. If ever released, most of them continue to be stripped of basic rights, including the franchise.

The "end of racism" nonsense plays into the hands of right-wing reactionaries as they go about instilling their view that oppressed minorities deserve nothing, ever. Take Justice Antonin Scalia sneering in February that pre-clearance is the "perpetuation of a racial entitlement." Cut of the same cloth was the Supreme Court's recent seven-to-one ruling that puts another nail in the coffin of affirmative

continued on page 11

Democrats Call the Shots

Union Tops Call Off BART Strike

Four days into a strike that shut down the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system, the fifth-largest public rail transportation system in the country, the leaders of Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 1555 and Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 1021 ordered their 2,400 members back to work. The union ranks had voted by close to 100 percent to authorize strike action against BART management's drive to gouge more out of their wages and health and pension benefits. But they were not even consulted, much less allowed to vote, on calling off their strike. Instead, they were unilaterally told to pull down their picket lines and get back on the job. Nothing had been gained, as it was announced that the massive givehack contract foisted on the unions in 2009 was to be extended for another month.

Who was really calling the shots here was California's Democratic Party governor Jerry Brown. His Labor Secretary, Marty Morgenstern, issued the "recommendation" for ending the strike. Thanking the union tops for their compliance, Morgenstern opined, "It's not easy to come back off a strike without a contract." No kidding! Once again, labor's fight has been sacrificed on the altar of the bureaucrats' fealty to the Democratic Party, promoting as "friends of labor" politicians who no less than the Republicans are the servants of the capitalist exploiters. Union after union has gone down to defeat in the service of this shell game. The once-powerful industrial unions now represent less than 7 percent of workers in the private sector. This has cleared the way for a massive union-busting assault against public workers, who like BART workers are lyingly portrayed as living high on the hog at the taxpayers' expense.

With BART management talking about imposing a contract on the striking workers, an SEIU 1021 leader argued: "BART wants to keep us out on strike and break us by turning the public against us." But rather than stepping up the fight by appealing for the active solidarity of other trade unionists as well as the working people and poor who had good reason to sympathize with the strike, the bureaucrats beat a cowardly retreat.

The potential for bringing out other workers was there for the asking. The contract for some 1,500 overwhelmingly black East Bay bus drivers and mechanics at AC Transit expired the same day as the BART unions' contract, and the

continued on page 10

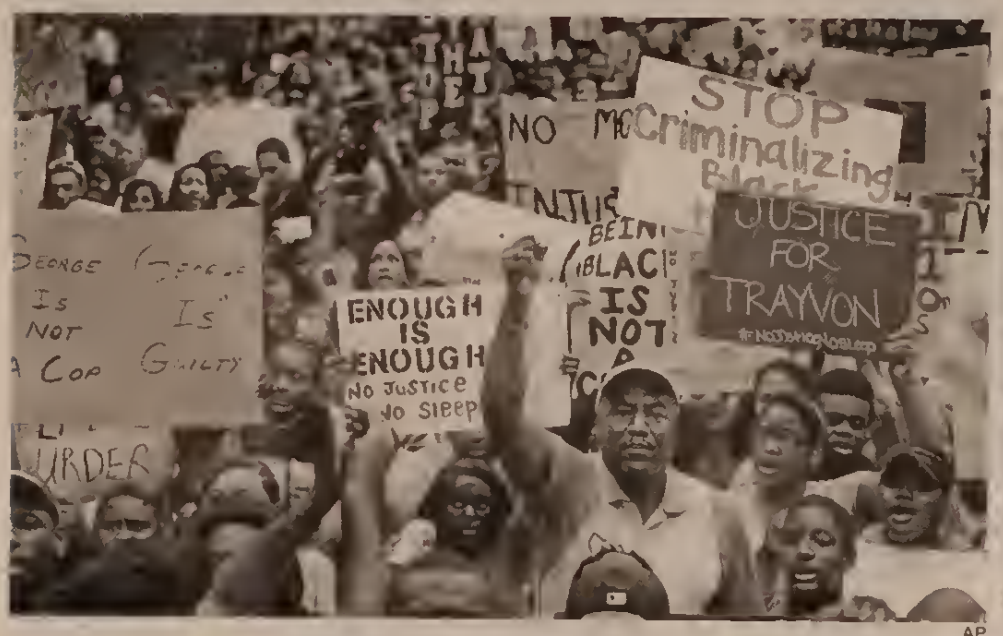
WORKERS VANGUARD

50¢

No. 1028

9 August 2013

Zimmerman Goes Free, Detroit Goes Under



AP

Bloomberg

Capitalist America: Racist Hell

Left: July 17 protest in Orlando, Florida, following acquittal of George Zimmerman. Right: Detroit neighborhood in ruins, with headquarters of bailed-out General Motors in the background.

George Zimmerman was given a pass twice, first by the police, then by a jury, for the coldblooded murder of Trayvon Martin. With the racist vigilante again free to go about his business, protests flared up in cities across the country. It was impossible to mistake the message of the verdict in his trial: black life is as cheap as ever in capitalist America, where cops gun down youth in the streets with impunity and the vast majority are locked into the bottom rungs of the economy. This raw reality is playing out with a vengeance today in heavily black Detroit, the one-time Motor City that the auto bosses turned into a bankrupt industrial wasteland, at the cost of tens of thousands of decent-paying union jobs. Meanwhile, the Supreme Court's recent gutting of the 1965 Voting Rights Act is another blow at the democratic rights that black people have wrested through struggle.

As the Spartacist League wrote in a leaflet issued following the Zimmerman verdict (reprinted on page 15): "Here was a case study in the machinery of courts, cops and prosecutors whose job is to maintain and defend a system rooted in the brutal exploitation of the many by the few—a system built on a bedrock of racial oppression, from chattel slavery to wage slavery." The expressions of anger and anguish at Zimmerman's acquittal compelled President Obama—the current boss of that system—to comment on the situation in a "surprise" speech on July 19.

Many black people found solace in his remarks, especially the account of his personal experiences with race prejudice before becoming a Senator and his acknowledgement of "a history of racial disparities in the application of our criminal laws." A common refrain is that the first black president wants to do right by black people, but his "hands are tied" by hostile, mainly Republican, forces. The simple fact is that Obama has done the job that the main body of the ruling class selected him for: overseer for a capitalist profit system that criminalizes young black men and chews up the working people, spitting them out when their labor is no longer needed. Former president Bill Clinton also told black people that he felt for them as he put 100,000 more cops on the streets and ended "welfare as we know it." This speaks to the role of the two parties of capital: While the Republicans openly declare their contempt for blacks, immigrants and the unions, the Democrats say they're your friends...and end up doing the same thing.

Obama's remarks came on the same day that the White House again rejected out of hand the idea that the federal government would rescue Detroit, where what remains of basic public services as well as the jobs, pensions and retiree health care benefits of city workers are on the chopping block. The Wall Street Democrat Obama—whose administration handed out trillions to the banks and tens of billions to the auto bosses—is showing an empty pocket to the city's black masses.

"Justice" System at Work

For all his lecturing on "racial profiling," Obama pronounced New York City police commissioner Ray Kelly "well-qualified" to run the Department of Homeland Security. Kelly is the architect of the city's notorious stop-and-frisk program, which he designed "to instill fear" in young blacks and Latinos. He also set up the NYPD's Demographics Unit, which has dispatched officers in the Northeast to spy on Muslims—fitting credentials for running the domestic "war on terror."

Obama endorsed the propriety of the Zimmerman trial, throwing in a threat against protesters who might engage in "violence." He also poured cold water on hopes about the outcome of the Justice Department's review of the case, intoning that the legal code and law enforcement are "traditionally done at the state and local levels, not at the federal level." Democratic Party liberals and mainstream black leaders widely lauded Obama's speech—as did the ever-obsequious International Socialist Organization (ISO), which wrote in "Why We're Still Marching" (*Socialist Worker*, 1 August) that the imperialist Commander-in-Chief "spoke powerfully" about racism.

When PBS host Tavis Smiley broke the mold and blasted Obama's talk as being as "weak as pre-sweetened Kool-Aid," he was heaped with abuse. Radical academic Cornel West, a onetime Obama supporter, is also getting flak for a July 22 interview with *Democracy Now!*, in which he called the president "a global George Zimmerman" for the lethal drone strikes in Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen that have come to symbolize his execution of the "war on terror."

For his sharp comments, West is persona non grata for Al Sharpton and his National Action Network, the NAACP and others organizing the 50th anniversary March on Washington events this month. A key purpose for the liberal establishment that sponsored the 1963 march, where Martin Luther King delivered his "I have a dream" speech, was to keep the lid on the mass struggles for black rights that were shaking the country and to channel them into pressure politics for the benefit of the Democratic Party (see article on page 13).

While there is a dearth of class and social struggle today, thanks in no small part to the hat-in-hand labor bureaucracy and black bourgeois politicians, the bankrupt liberal strategy remains the same: pressuring the federal government and pushing the fortunes of the Democratic Party. Even as delicate criticisms of Sharpton and the NAACP are offered, the ISO's "Still Marching" editorial expresses delight that such "mainstream groups" are organizing the protest, not least because it "will widen the mobilization, both for the Washington march and for anti-racist demonstrations generally." They predict, correctly, that criticism of Obama will be verboten from the platform, but that's no matter for the ISO—it's going to be big!

With their calls for federal civil rights charges to be brought against Zimmerman, the liberals sow illusions in the same Justice Department that serves as the top cops of a system of rampant racist police terror, frame-up trials and overflowing prisons. In fact, at a time when state prison populations have declined as a whole, mainly due to budget pressures, the federal prison system has grown by 3 percent annually. Attorney General Eric Holder may well do something to block the openly racist voter suppression measures adopted in Texas and other states in the wake of the Supreme Court decision on the Voting Rights Act. Such a step would simply be in the Democrats' own interest. The black people, immigrants and other minorities denied the right to vote by these measures generally go Democrat.

For the Right of Armed Self-Defense

The Sanford, Florida, jury accepted George Zimmerman's claim of self-defense, which was buttressed by the

continued on page 14

Pseudoscience, Snake Oil and Stalinism in China.....4

On Oakland, L.A. Cop Terror

Los Angeles
30 June 2013

Re: *Workers Vanguard* No. 1021, 5 April 2013. "Oakland Cops: Racist Killers on the Loose."

The title "Cops...on the loose" suggests that an otherwise "fair and legal" condition exists, seemingly contradicting WV: "...in the inner cities is how the cops have *always* operated, everywhere." What WV pointed out, however, that the misleadership of the unions—defense organizations a revolutionary workers party would direct against exploitation and the state's apparatus of coercion and violence—allows the state to "loosen" its leash on their hired thugs. Your chronicling of "Killings and Cover-Ups" show federal "reforms" as a cynical ploy. As bottom-feeders the International Socialist Organization (ISO), et al., epitomize what left-liberals do: advocate blunting social contradictions to declare class struggle "absurd." To mystify oppression they pose a "realistic" struggle: "What if the Oakland City Council and Mayor...fired all the cops...and exchanged badges for jobs?", asks the ISO.

Bratton was LAPD chief in 2007 when his cops charged a May Day Rally in MacArthur Park. Women, children, T.V. cameramen [were] violently attacked white personnel carriers rushed in as "back-up." Legal settlements from this were concluded in February 2010 on a Friday. On Monday LAPD-insider, Charlie Beck, was sworn in "untainted" of this episode of the "reformed" department.

I appreciate mention of black ex-LAPD cop, Christopher Dorner, as again, this was the state bringing its violence to bear. One militant's stated view was, "well, he was just a cop...". Trained as a cop, and with his "manifesto," Dorner had some authority on cop "justice" aimed at the populace. In Los Angeles, the LAPD and Sheriffs virtually compete in shooting down victims first, and..., "not answering questions later." One sentiment expressed was that the LAPD wouldn't want Dorner on trial to make public details of racism inside the LAPD. He had a zero chance to stand trial for the alleged killings. The bounty for his "capture and conviction" was a public relations stunt. Witness LA's Police Protective League, et al., attempting to withdraw their bounty after killing him with pyrotechnic bombs shot into the cabin, while on audio cops were heard screaming "burn him!" Two Latina victims wounded by the LAPD were promised a replacement of their bullet-riddled truck. Chief Beck categorized the new truck a "prize"...obligating them to "pay tax" on it! Roundly criticized (including by an editorial of the LA Times, whose employees they were) the LAPD reversed their tack.

This June the LA Times reported on Chief Beck's investigation: "Dorner had no basis for his claims"; and LA's Liberal Civil Rights attorney Connie Rice's (cousin of Condoleezza Rice) op-ed: "Dorner's web of lies about the LAPD." Rice contends Dorner "...was denigrating the very real changes to the department," and "Beck...works every day to reinforce racially tolerant and just policing." What of the vicious assault on minority students at a USC sanctioned party in May where on YouTube riot cops are slamming young women to the ground! With Beck and Rice, the State's agencies and their mouthpieces have burned and buried Dorner again!

B. Montoya

***WV* replies:** We appreciate the writer's further exposé of the Los Angeles Police Department, helping puncture the myth that former police chief William Bratton transformed the corrupt, notoriously racist LAPD into a "kinder, gentler" police force.

The headline "Oakland Cops: Racist Killers on the Loose" is in fact simply a description of a police force long notorious for its rampaging bonapartism, particularly directed against the ghetto and barrio poor. Of course, all cops regard their badge as a license to kill. But this license is and has been used with particular abandon by the Oakland Police Department. As indicated by the kicker to the headline, "There's No Reforming This Gang," and as B. Montoya himself notes, the article in no way suggested that a "more fair and legal" police force does or could exist.

Our article was in large part devoted to puncturing illusions in police reform schemes peddled by various purported "socialists," the trade-union misleaders, bourgeois liberals and others. Over many decades, such schemes have been repeatedly implemented to supposedly rein in the Oakland cops. Indeed, this history provides a living refutation of the liberal-reformist strategy, which stands in the way of the struggle to sweep away the capitalist state machinery through workers revolution. ■

TROTSKY

LENIN

On Bourgeois Justice

The following excerpt from The ABC of Communism, *a textbook for the education of Communist codres in the early Soviet workers state, explains how the ruling class in capitalist society uses its "justice" system to repress the working class and the oppressed, whatever democratic trappings that system is wrapped in.*

Among the various institutions of bourgeois society which serve to oppress and deceive the working masses, must be mentioned bourgeois justice. This estimable institution is carried on under the guidance of laws passed in the interests of the exploiting class. Whatever the composition of the court, its decisions are restricted in accordance with the volumes of statutes in which are incorporated all the privileges of capital and all the lack of privileges of the toiling masses.

As far as the organization of bourgeois justice is concerned, this is in perfect harmony with the characteristics of the bourgeois State. Where the bourgeois State is comparatively frank in its methods, where it is free from hypocrisy in its determination that the decisions of the courts shall be favourable to the ruling class, there the judges are appointed from above; but even when they are elected, only the members of the privileged stratum are entitled to vote. When the masses have been sufficiently brought to heel by capital, so that they are duly submissive and regard the laws of the bourgeois State as their own laws, the workers are permitted to a certain extent to be their own judges, just as they are allowed to vote exploiters and their henchmen into parliament. Thus originated trial by jury, thanks to which legal decisions made in the interests of capital can masquerade as decisions made by the "whole people."

—Nikolai Bukharin and Evgeny Preobrazhensky, *The ABC of Communism* (1920)

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Union Tops Bow to Profit Drive

Postal Workers Face Jobs Massacre

In the past two years, postal workers have been subjected to waves of draconian layoffs linked to service cutbacks and post office closures. As many as 220,000 union jobs are at stake as Washington, goaded by capitalists standing to profit directly from privatization and by ideologues hell-bent on "downsizing" government, takes the ax to this essential social service. Under Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe's plans, 211 mail-processing plants will have closed by the end of this year, with more closures projected after that. This alone will eliminate 35,000 jobs while slowing mail delivery. Meanwhile, trucking and custodial jobs are being contracted out to private companies in California, New Jersey and elsewhere. Particularly dependent on the postal service, the poor, the elderly and minorities are hit hardest as post office hours are cut and first-class mail delivery standards are relaxed.

Bloomberg

AP

Above: Letter carrier at work in Washington, D.C. Right: Postal workers at September 2011 union rally in Springfield, Illinois.

The United States Postal Service (USPS) is the second-largest employer in the country after Wal-Mart. Its unionized public workforce—some 550,000 workers, down from 683,000 in 2007—makes it a big, juicy target for the enemies of labor. The postal cutbacks are a special threat to black workers, who make up 21 percent of the workforce. USPS is also a significant employer of Latinos and Asians, and 40 percent of its workers are women.

For generations, the post office was one of the few places where black people could get decent jobs, including during the Jim Crow era when even college-educated blacks were systematically excluded from most occupations. At the same time, racist discrimination pervaded the postal service. Letter carriers were usually white so as to present a "white face" to the public, and the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) continued to have separate black and white locals in the South until that practice was banned by the federal government in 1962, at the height of Southern civil rights struggles. Black postal workers' struggles against racism in the workplace and inside the unions in the post-World War II era were an important component of the early civil rights movement. This made them a particular target of the purges of reds and union militants during the McCarthy period.

Universal postal service and national post offices were integral to industrial development under capitalism. The need for speedy mail delivery was a factor in the development of railroads in the 19th century and air transport in the 20th. In the past quarter century, however, postal workers have been hit by privatization, outsourcing and job slashing in a range of advanced capitalist countries, particularly in the European Union and Japan. In the Netherlands, privatization has progressed so far that, in conditions redolent of Charles Dickens' time, mail sorting and delivery are done out of private houses by casual workers denied contracts and benefits and paid measly piecework wages. In Britain, the former Labour government opened the way to privatizations and forced through tens of thousands of job cuts, longer workweeks, speedup, effective pay cuts and office closures. The current Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition is poised to sell off the Royal Mail outright. In response, the Communications Workers Union has threatened to ballot its members for a national strike.

In the U.S., the pretext for closures and layoffs is the deficits in the postal services budget. The "free market" apostles leading the attack scream that the postal service needs to make a profit. But mail is a basic public service, like garbage collection, running water, public transit, education and health care. The requirement that the post office generate all its own revenue dates back to the 1970 Postal Service Reorganization Act. In order to expose postal workers to "market discipline," the Post Office Department was reorganized as the self-funded, semi-independent agency USPS, which nevertheless remained subject to Congressional oversight.

In 2002, the government declared that USPS was "overfunding" pensions paid into the federal Civil Service Retirement System to the tune of tens of billions of dollars. Postal union officials argued that this money—in actuality, deferred wages—be used by USPS to stave off rate increases and otherwise keep the postal service "competitive." Workers saw the question differently: they wanted full funding of their pensions and health care!

AP

18 March 1970: Letter carriers picket General Post Office in New York City at outset of strike that defied federal law, spread nationwide...and won!

In 2006, Congress and the Bush White House cooked up a scheme, codified in the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (PAEA), to shuffle retiree health care funds onto the Treasury Department's balance sheet, where they could be used to help offset the federal deficit. Originally supported by the NALC leadership, the measure gave USPS until 2016 to pay 50 years' worth of projected health care benefits—as much as $100 billion—into a new Retiree Health Benefits Fund. This has led to the massive postal service deficits that have put wind in the sails of the union-busters and profiteers who want to break up USPS and sell it for a song.

The drive to ax postal jobs, while long in the making, accelerated in recent years as part of the bipartisan, one-sided class war against public employees unions, as working people and the poor are made to pay for the bosses' economic crisis. Donahoe was elected in 2010 by a USPS Board of Governors packed with corporate lobbyists appointed by the White House. At every turn, Donahoe has sought to bust the postal unions and undermine the service while corporations such as Pitney Bowes, FedEx and UPS jockey for the profits they expect to get if USPS is privatized. When he demanded that Congress invalidate the clauses in union contracts that prohibit layoffs of workers with at least six years of service, he complained that he could not get rid of enough workers fast enough through attrition, buyouts, etc.

The latest attack originating from Capitol Hill is the "Postal Reform Act," which was submitted on June 13 by California Republican Congressman Darrell Issa, a point man for the right-wing Heritage Foundation and Cato Institute. The bill would end Saturday delivery for first-class mail and begin to phase out door-to-door delivery. Putting USPS under a "temporary governance authority," the measure would ban layoff protections from union contracts and target 30 percent of post offices for closure in favor of contracted retail outlets.

1970 Postal Strike Defied the Law and Won

Facing these attacks, postal workers are crippled by union misleaders who have all but relinquished labor's own weapons, not daring to even threaten a strike in defense of their members' jobs and benefits. It took hard class struggle—not begging Congress or the White House—for labor to wrest real gains from the capitalist masters. This lesson is part of the postal workers' own history, as seen in the 1970 national postal strike. Defying the government's anti-strike laws, the strike won huge gains for postal workers and their unions and advanced the cause of the entire labor movement.

By 1970, the struggle for black rights and the U.S. rulers' counterrevolutionary war in Vietnam had polarized society. While students and others staged mass antiwar demonstrations, workers' wages were being rapidly eroded by inflation caused by the war. Exemplifying the dramatic rise in rank-and-file labor militancy, in March 1970 the New York branch of the NALC walked out in defiance of their national leadership. Like all federal workers, postal workers were banned from striking. On March 23, President Richard Nixon declared a national emergency and ordered 23,000 troops to occupy the post offices in New York. But the wildcat spread throughout the country, mostly against the will of the union leadership. With young and black militants taking the lead, postal workers defied back-to-work court injunctions. All told, over 210,000 workers struck nationally in the largest strike ever against the U.S. government.

It is not accidental that the action started in New York City, where a series of public workers strikes in defiance of the bosses' laws had taken place, including the victorious 1966 NYC transit strike. In 1968, Mayor John Lindsay backed off from his threat to use the National Guard against striking sanitation workers after the Central Labor Council, under pressure from the city's workers, threatened a general strike.

When the NYC letter carriers went out, the Spartacist League issued a leaflet on March 23 headlined: "Postal Strike Aids All Workers! Answer Any Troops' Use by General Strike!" The leaflet pointed out: "The same army that Nixon is threatening to use in breaking the postal strike is being used to suppress the Vietnamese workers and peasants in order to keep Asia safe for American business." It went on:

> "To win this strike, the postal workers need an aggressive leadership, capable of bargaining hard against the government,

continued on page 12

NOTICE

***Workers Vanguard* skips alternate issues in June, July and August. Our next issue will be dated September 6.**

Pseudoscience, Snake Oil and Stalinism in China

Reuters photos

Quackery vs. science in Hefei, Anhui Province: Herbal and cupping "treatments" for rheumatism, 2012 (left); research on bird flu virus, 2013 (right).

The following is a document submitted to the Spartacist League earlier this year by New York comrade J. Thomas. It has been edited for publication in WV.

Decades after the 1949 Revolution, mysticism is rampant in China. Even among the educated urban population, including overseas students, many are self-professed atheists who embrace modern science but simultaneously to one degree or another accept all kinds of anti-materialist nonsense. While less so than elsewhere in Asia, beliefs in things such as numerology, feng shui, face-reading (like palm-reading), astrology, personality traits based on blood type and especially mystical healing are ubiquitous. The theories behind acupuncture, the related practice of moxibustion, herbal cures, *qigong*, etc., all involve the manipulation of nonexistent vital forces such as qi, yin and yang and various humors. Fighting against these notions is one way to combat the widespread misidentification of revolutionary Marxism in China with Maoist idealism.

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has fostered the persistence of medical quackery, giving it a scientific and even Marxist gloss. This is in line with its nationalist Stalinist program of building "socialism in one country" and opposing international proletarian revolution. The glorification of traditions of the "motherland," the return of all the old crap in the face of scarcity, and the petty-bourgeois character of the CCP bureaucracy all play a role. There are all the contradictions one would expect from a caste sitting on top of the workers state that, issuing out of the peasant-based 1949 Revolution, was bureaucratically deformed from its inception. Among the gains of the revolution were tremendous advances in public health and science. It was necessary to combat superstitions which were a prop for landlord rule in the countryside. But there have been zigs and zags over the years, and there continue to be conflicts within the bureaucracy on this question.

May Fourth Period

The Stalinist CCP is a qualitatively different party from the one that emerged out of the anti-imperialist May Fourth Movement of 1919 under the impact of the Bolshevik-led workers revolution in Russia. After the imperialist powers crushed the 1900 Boxer Rebellion—which had raised the call "Uphold the dynasty, destroy the foreigners!"—it became clear that resistance to imperialism based on reactionary superstitions was a dead end. Those seeking to liberate China looked toward modern science and were open to ideas imported from abroad, including in medicine. After the growth of a combative proletariat in China during the First World War and the influence of the Bolsheviks, the best of these were won to communism.

Chen Duxiu, a founding leader of the CCP and later a Trotskyist, was the principal modernizing intellectual of the time. In 1915, he wrote in "Call to Youth":

> "Our physicians know no science; not only are they not acquainted with human anatomy, but also they do not analyze the properties of medicines; as for bacteria and contagious diseases, they have never heard of them. They can only parrot the talk about the five elements, their mutual promotions and preventions, cold and heat, *yin* and *yang*, and prescribe medicine according to ancient formulae. Their technique is practically the same as that of an archer! The height of their marvelous imaginations is the theory of *ch'i* (primal force), which even extends to the techniques of professional strong men and Taoist priests. But though you seek high and low in the universe, you will never know what this 'primal force' exactly is. All these nonsensical ideas and unreasonable beliefs can be cured at the root only by science. For to explain truth by science means proving everything with fact. Although the process is slower than that of imagination and arbitrary decision, yet every step taken is on firm ground; it is different from those imaginative flights which eventually cannot advance even one inch. The amount of truth in the universe is boundless, and the fertile areas in the realm of science awaiting the pioneer are immense! Youth, take up the task!"
>
> —quoted in Ssu-yu Teng and John K. Fairbank, *China's Response to the West* (Harvard University Press, 1954)

Lu Xun, another major figure in the May Fourth Movement, described in "Call to Arms" how as a child he was often sent to the medicine shop by his ill father: "The physician who made out the prescriptions was very well-known, he used unusual drugs; aloe root dug up in winter, sugar-cane that had been three years exposed to frost, twin crickets, and *ardisia*...all of which were difficult to procure. But my father's illness went from bad to worse until he died." Lu relates how he later was exposed to modern science at school and continues:

> "Recalling the talk and prescriptions of physicians I had known and comparing them with what I now knew, I came to the conclusion those physicians must be either unwitting or deliberate charlatans; and I began to sympathize with the invalids and families who suffered at their hands. From translated histories I also learned that the Japanese Reformation had originated, to a great extent, with the introduction of Western medical science to Japan.
>
> "These inklings took me to a provincial medical college in Japan. I dreamed a beautiful dream that on my return to China I would cure patients like my father, who had been wrongly treated, while if war broke out I would serve as an army doctor, at the same time strengthening my countrymen's faith in reformation."
>
> —quoted in *Selected Stories of Lu Hsun* (Foreign Languages Press, 1989)

In China under the bourgeois-nationalist Guomindang, traditional healing was kept out of whatever state health care existed. There was even a proposal in 1929 by Dr. Yu Yunxiu to abolish it, which was defeated in the face of fierce opposition by traditional healers and the pharmaceutical industry.

The beginnings of a change in attitude toward Chinese medicine by the CCP coincided with its transformation into a peasant-based party, soon to come under Mao Zedong's leadership. This was after the crushing of the Second Chinese Revolution of 1925-27 and the slaughter of tens of thousands of Communists. Responsibility for this disaster lay with the Stalin/Bukharin leadership of the Communist International, which had ordered the CCP to liquidate into the Guomindang.

As David A. Palmer wrote in *Qigong Fever* (2007):

> "The CCP's attitude toward traditional healing underwent significant changes since the Party's early days in the first decades of the twentieth century. The first Chinese Marxists, though not especially interested in medical issues, were, as a logical consequence of their modernist orientation, opposed to the traditional healing traditions associated with the old society. In 1929 the Party discussed a policy proposal to abolish the old medicine in order to develop modern medicine and hygiene. But after the experience of the Soviets [CCP-controlled areas] in Jiangxi and Shaanxi, the Long March, and the deepening of the Party's rural roots in the 1930s, the CCP's attitude began to change: far from the cities, the Red Army had to resort to traditional therapists for medical care. A conscious policy was formulated in the 'Liberated Areas' in the 1940s to make use of local medical resources within a 'scientific orientation.' Mao called on modern-trained doctors to unite with traditional therapists, who were closer to the people, and to 'help them to reform.' Traditional doctors were thus no longer seen as enemies of progress.... Such was the context in which official *qigong* was born."

Both before and after the 1949 Revolution, "uniting" with traditional doctors to "reform" them and put their techniques on a scientific basis was considered part of the anti-imperialist united front.

1949 Revolution

After the CCP came to power, for the first time basic modern sanitation was introduced into many parts of the country and there were massive public health programs, largely modeled on those in the Soviet Union. But as we pointed out in "The Origins of Chinese Trotskyism" (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 53, Summer 1997): "The Maoist ideology of the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state reflected the provincial, anti-internationalist consciousness characteristic of the mass of the peasantry, which was perfectly consonant with the conservative outlook of the Stalin bureaucracy in the Kremlin. The only difference was that the Chinese Stalinists

Sidney D. Gamble, Museum of the Revolution, Beijing (portrait)

May 4th Movement, 1919: Students outside Beijing's Tiananmen Gate (left) protest imperialist subjugation and division of China following World War I; May 4th leader Chen Duxiu (center) edited *New Youth* journal, which became organ of Chinese Communist Party founded by Chen and others.

defended 'socialism' in a different 'one country'."

At first, the incorporation of traditional healers into the health care system was mostly an attempt to educate and regulate them, so the existing doctors would at least have a clue about modern medicine. The call at the time was to study Western medicine. However, this very quickly turned into "Doctors of Western medicine, study Chinese medicine!" There was some resistance in the Ministry of Health to this policy, the goal of which was to unite the two in a new medicine by raising the level of Chinese traditional medicine.

Hundreds of the country's (precious few and desperately needed) doctors trained in modern medicine were removed from their work for two and a half years to study Chinese medicine under traditional healers. They were, understandably, not enthusiastic. Of the four medical texts they studied, the most recent was written in 1596; the other three were from the second and third centuries.

> "The move to make doctors trained in Western medicine now study Chinese medicine has since been criticized as a dreadful 'waste of human talent, a waste of the nation's manpower and material resources.'... One of the first rules made in these classes was that *no* questions were to be asked; 'How the teacher taught, that was how you were to learn'."
>
> —Kim Taylor, *Chinese Medicine in Early Communist China, 1945-63* (Psychology Press, 2005)

In 1958, Mao pronounced: "China's medicine and pharmacology is a great treasure-house, and should be diligently explored and improved upon." But that was for the masses. Mao told his personal physician, "Even though I believe we should promote Chinese medicine, I personally do not believe in it. I don't take Chinese medicine" (Dr. Li Zhisui, *The Private Life of Chairman Mao* [Random House, 1994]).

During the Great Leap Forward of that period and the subsequent break with the Soviet Union, nationalist glorification of Chinese tradition was pushed even more. This was not simply a personal proclivity of Mao; fellow CCP leader Liu Shaoqi was if anything more enthusiastic, having proclaimed in 1954 that "despising Chinese medicine is servile and subservient bourgeois thinking." When it suited his needs during the Cultural Revolution—the massive intrabureaucratic fight that racked China for a decade beginning in 1966—Mao would attack his rival Liu and others for promoting feudal superstitions, and *qigong* was banned for a number of years.

Wang Tianzhu

"Barefoot doctor" treating child in peasant village, part of extension of basic health care to countryside following 1949 Revolution.

Chinese Medicine Exported

The present popularity of acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) in North America has its origin in China's anti-Soviet alliance with U.S. imperialism. During Richard Nixon's visit to China in 1972, it was widely reported that *New York Times* columnist James Reston, who had accompanied Henry Kissinger to China the previous year, had been given only acupuncture anesthesia during an emergency appendectomy. (In fact, he had also been given conventional anesthesia.) Demonstrations of traditional healing and surgery on wide-awake patients supposedly using only acupuncture as an anesthetic were presented to a credulous Western press. Reston quipped, "I've seen the past, and it works!"

In what should have been completely obvious at the time, analysis of photographs and videos of these surgeries have since definitively proven that they were fake. But the quackery found an eager audience in the American petty bourgeoisie, including among New Left counterculture remnants embracing New Age mysticism. It also began its creep into official medicine; the *American Journal of Chinese Medicine* was founded the same year as Nixon's trip. This trend would explode even further after the counterrevolution in the Soviet Union two decades ago. Furthermore, after the CCP introduced "market reforms" and trade opened up, exporting Chinese medicine became a lucrative business.

"In the Future, We Can Turn Humans into Supernaturals"

In 1979, Tang Yu, a boy in Sichuan Province, was reported to have the ability to read with his ears. A front-page story appeared in *Sichuan Daily*, accompanied by a photo of him with the provincial party secretary. The story was picked up in papers nationwide, and suddenly there were children popping up everywhere who could read with their ears and armpits and display other ESP powers. Under tests, Tang Yu was proved to be faking, but no matter: Did that prove all the other kids didn't have the powers? A back-and-forth struggle in the bureaucracy was touched off which was to continue until the crackdown on the Falun Gong cult.

Embarrassed that the party press was reading like the *National Enquirer*—reports of UFO sightings were also widespread in this period—CCP Propaganda Chief Hu Yaobang attempted to call a halt. On the anniversary of the May Fourth Movement in 1979, the *People's Daily* published an editorial stating: "It is strange that certain comrades in the scientific institutions and in leadership positions don't go to learn from science and scientists, but take the initiative to applaud conjuring tricks, are full of praise for 'magical ears'."

Self-criticisms and retractions rolled in for a bit, but then came the counterattack. And it was mainly from the scientific, military and medical establishment. The prominent journal *Ziran* (Nature) published studies claiming to substantiate "ear reading" ability and organized major academic conferences promoting research into "extraordinary powers of the human body." It was claimed that cultivating *qigong* could unleash these powers, which could include X-ray vision, the capability to move objects with the mind and healing abilities. A key figure in pushing for this research was the brilliant and highly influential rocket scientist Qian Xuesen (see our obituary for Qian in *WV* No. 952, 12 February 2010). His argument expresses the nationalism at work:

> "I believe Qigong, TCM (including Chinese medicine, Mongolian medicine, Tibetan medicine), and human special function, once integrated with modern science and technology, would create a Marxist Science.... Through this integration, this new science would also change modern science and promote it. This is our great task.... We can say it will be the scientific revolution of the East."
>
> —quoted in Lin Zixin et al., *Qigong: Chinese Medicine or Pseudoscience?* (Prometheus Books, 1998)

To quiet the controversy, the CCP's Propaganda Department established the "Triple No" policy: "'no publicizing, no criticism and no controversy' in the press in relation to Extraordinary Powers." After further pressure from Qian Xuesen and others, Hu Yaobang backed off somewhat. In effect, there was no criticism and controversy printed, but still plenty of publicity for the "extraordinary powers." In 1986, a national, state-sponsored China Qigong Science Research Society was established.

As we pointed out in our article on Falun Gong (*WV* No. 762, 3 August 2001), the rollback of health care under the "market reforms" (massive layoffs from state-owned industries with workers losing health benefits, hospital care unaffordable for masses of people, even minimal "barefoot doctor" programs abolished) spurred the explosion of reactionary healing cults.

In the mid 1980s, *qigong* was becoming a mass phenomenon. Yan Xin, who had studied at the Chengdu Institute of Chinese Medicine, was reported to have cured a man's broken vertebrae using *qigong*. He was summoned by a member of the Politburo to treat Deng Jiaxian, a famous atomic scientist who was ill with cancer. Deng died shortly after the treatment, but Yan had so charmed everyone he was deemed to have "considerably alleviated his pain." Using the same routine as any faith-healing preacher in the U.S., he was heavily promoted by the CCP and was soon giving lectures before audiences of thousands. He was transmitting his "powers" via television and collaborating in laboratory studies at Qinghua University and was brought in by the military to extinguish a forest fire with the powers of his mind. Other *qigong* masters began to emerge and gain mass followings at this time, including Falun Gong founder Li Hongzhi.

It was in response to an article by prominent nuclear scientist He Zuoxiu criticizing Falun Gong that the group staged its first demonstrations. The first political act of this darling of "human rights" and "democracy" champions was to demand that the Communist Party censor its opponents. Initially this was quite successful, with newspapers and television stations falling all over themselves making retractions. It was only after the mass demonstration at the bureaucracy's Zhongnanhai compound in Beijing in 1999 that the government turned decisively against Falun Gong.

After the Suppression of Falun Gong

Sima Nan, a journalist who as a youth was enamored with the *qigong* masters, had for years been campaigning to expose them as fakes. While they still had the support of much of the bureaucracy, he was vilified and more than once severely beaten. Now, he often appears on television and his books are published. In 2002, a science popularization law was passed, which requires science communicators to expose pseudoscience. This is extremely controversial. A televised debate on the subject broke out into a physical fight. The science writer Fang Shimin (pen name Fang Zhuozi) was successfully sued for libel when he wrote that in the 1930s the "discovery" of a tenth planet based on the ancient Eight Diagrams theory was pseudoscience. (The "discoverer" was a government official who had died in 1992.)

In 2006, Zhang Gongyao, a professor at Zhongnan University, started an online petition demanding that TCM be removed from the state health care system. This provoked an immediate condemnation from the Ministry of Health and a storm of nationalist vitriol on the Internet. His proposal did get some support from scientists, including He Zuoxiu and Fang Zhuozi. Fang wrote a book titled *Piping*

continued on page 7

AP

Demotix

Left: Leading Chinese scientist He Zuoxiu delivers speech against reactionary Falun Gong in Beijing, July 1999. Right: Falun Gong protest in Sydney, Australia, 2008.

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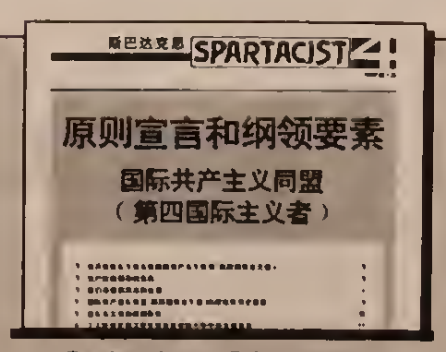

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IG Brief for Anti-Union Drive in Mexico

The following article was submitted by our comrades of the Grupo Espartaquista de México.

The polemic "IG Chokes on Defense of Mexican Teachers Union" (*WV* No. 1025, 31 May) seems to have hit the Internationalist Group (IG) where it hurts. In response, the IG has written a 15-page, single-spaced article, "SL on Corporatism in Mexico: Games Centrists Play" (internationalist.org, 5 July), available to date on the Web and only in English. Full of alibis, distortions and petty lies, with a dash of libel, this exercise in demagogy has but one purpose: to try to hide the simple fact that the IG fails to uphold the elementary proletarian principle of defending the trade unions, no matter how bureaucratic and pro-capitalist their leaderships, against attack by the capitalist state.

Central to the IG's diatribe is our response to the attack led by Mexican president Enrique Peña Nieto of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) on the National Union of Education Workers (SNTE). As part of pushing through an anti-union education "reform," in February the government arrested Elba Esther Gordillo, a widely hated bureaucrat who headed the SNTE for over two decades. The murderous and extravagantly corrupt Gordillo has committed enormous crimes against the working class. But her arrest was a direct attack on the teachers union and the labor movement as a whole. In a March 4 leaflet, the Grupo Espartaquista de México demanded: "Government, hands off the SNTE!" and called "for the *immediate release of Gordillo and all arrested union officials*" (see *WV* No. 1019, 8 March). In Mexico as elsewhere, it is labor's task to clean its own house.

In contrast, the IG's *Internationalist* (March 2013) refused to defend the SNTE, writing it off as purely "a state institution, a labor police agency whose purpose is to prop up the regime and regiment the workers." Denouncing our comrades for defending the union, the IG engaged in centrist double-talk designed to obscure its betrayal. The March *Internationalist* article acknowledged the obvious point that Gordillo's arrest was "intended to crush any resistance from the side of the teachers." But while raising the demand "Peña Nieto, hands off the teachers!", it avoided calling the SNTE what it is: a union. As our polemic put it: "You can't have it both ways: either you defend the union under attack, despite its brutal, pro-capitalist leadership, or you add grist to the union-busters' mill."

Now the IG makes its anti-union stance even more clear, omitting from its massive, turgid response the demand "Hands off the teachers" as well as any hint that Gordillo's arrest may have been an attack on the workers movement. With unusual candor, the IG writes that the *WV* No. 1025 article "says 'Gordillo's arrest is a direct attack on the teachers union and the entire Mexican labor movement,' part of a bourgeois drive to 'dismantle the unions.' Yet Peña Nieto went out of his way to insist he was not attacking the SNTE, that he would maintain 'a respectful and constant dialogue with the SNTE'." And if the Commander-in-Chief says it, who is the IG to question it?

Seeking to cover its crass opportunism, the IG relies on a concocted "theory" according to which corporatist unions such as the SNTE are not "workers unions at all" but "the class enemy" and, ultimately, "death squads." As we explained in our polemic, corporatism has long been a hallmark of the capitalist system in Mexico, particularly since the 1930s left-nationalist regime of Lázaro Cárdenas. Through this system, major unions, primarily grouped in the Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM), have been integrated as components of the PRI, with the government installing and removing union bureaucrats (*charros*) at will. "In return," we wrote, "these *charros* (cowboys) policed the unions for the state, purging and often killing dissident workers while benefiting generously from corruption." But even those unions most integrated into the state apparatus have been compelled to wage some struggles against the capitalists' drive to extort ever more profit from the labor of their members, particularly in recent decades as cracks appeared in the corporatist setup.

Taking the degree of bureaucratism and violence as its standard, as opposed to a class analysis, the IG dismisses about half of Mexico's unions, refusing to defend them when they come under attack. Seeking to manipulate workers' anger with their union leaders in order to push through a union-busting line, the IG provides a thin coating of red paint to widespread petty-bourgeois anti-union prejudices in Mexico and elsewhere.

What drives the IG's attacks on the GEM as "CTM socialists" is its appetite to accommodate to the bourgeois-nationalist Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD). All of its obfuscations cannot hide the fact that the only unions the IG will recognize as genuine are those whose leaders are loyal to the PRD, while unions closer or affiliated to the PRI are but "the armed fist of the bourgeoisie."

The pro-PRD union tops tie workers to the Mexican bourgeoisie by pushing nationalist ideology and sowing illusions in reforming the capitalist state, engaging in their own bureaucratic methods to reinforce their hold on the unions. For the IG, this spells "a class difference between the official *state* labor bodies and the new 'independent' unions," as its response proclaims (emphasis in original). While the IG admits that the pro-PRD union leaders are politically tied to the bourgeoisie, it states that "they are not state or ruling-party functionaries or leaders answerable to the government, not the union ranks." So for the IG, union leaders' support to the PRD is evidence of the members' control of their unions. Militants who raise opposition to those bureaucrats' class collaboration will no doubt come to a different conclusion.

Baffled by Reality

The actions of the SNTMMSRM miners union in particular have put the IG in a real predicament. The SNTMMSRM, which used to be a staunch pillar of the old corporatist system, has been for at least a decade one of the most militant unions in the country. The IG's schema simply cannot account for this fact. In "IG Chokes," we noted that in 2006 the National Action Party government went after the union by trying to oust and imprison its leader, Napoleón Gómez Urrutia, a move that touched off a series of powerful strikes. Among these was a nationwide strike, which the IG dismisses for lasting "all of 72 hours."

Most important was the militant 2006 strike at Lázaro Cárdenas, Michoacán, which the IG barely mentions in passing. This strike—lasting "all of" 141 days—withstood an attack, at the cost of two workers killed, by some 800 police and obtained a smashing victory, including economic gains and recognition of the union and its leader. The IG, we pointed out in the same article, "refused to defend the SNTMMSRM leadership or the union itself against the state, undoubtedly given the union's *charro* leadership and history of affiliation with the PRI." The article continued:

> "Prefiguring its line that Gordillo's arrest was a 'settling of scores among the rulers,' the IG claimed that Gómez Urrutia's ouster was a 'settling of accounts within the regime' (even though the PRI was not then in power). While vaguely calling to 'reject this frontal assault by the government,' the IG's *El Internacionalista/Edición México* No. 2 [August 2006] omitted any call for victory to the strikes or for dropping the charges against the union leader."

Labeling this another one of *WV*'s "smears," the IG's response quotes their 2006 article at greater length, in the process *confirming* that they did not call for victory to the strikes or for dropping the charges against the union leader. After some painful contortions seemingly designed to give the impression that they, too, defend the miners union, the IG quotes a ***February 2008*** article about a strike in Cananea, Sonora, that started on 30 July 2007. After many strikes carried out by the miners union throughout the country over a period of two years, the IG started to sense that its line was not too popular among militant miners.

Neither quite sticking to their position nor repudiating it—they are as infallible as they are prone to bending with

David Hernández

WV Photo

Left: Joaquín Hernández Galicia ("La Quina," at right), jailed chief of Mexican oil workers union, January 1989. Right: "Oil workers march on presidential palace, January 12, protesting arrest of union leader. Salinas government has declared war on labor" (caption from *WV* No. 476, 28 April 1989).

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the wind—the IG choked out a couple of lines that they do, in fact, "demand that all the charges against leaders of ostensible labor organizatiuns be dropped." We do not know how many strikes a union has to wage before the IG drops its sneaky "ostensible" label. But simply defending the miners union, its strikes and its leaders against the bourgeois state was enough for the GEM and the International Communist League to be accused by these windhags of alibiing "death squads"!

Attempting to reconcile the proven militancy of the Cananea miners with its line that their union is essentially a nest of bourgeois cops, the IG now declares with breathtaking disingenuousness that Cananea Local 65 has "partially broken" from the national union. This is a lie that would infuriate any of these miners. Three years after police broke their strike, Local 65 refuses to go back to work. All along, the miners have demanded that the company recognize the union and that the federal government recognize Gómez Urrutia as its leader.

Ever Deeper in Their Labyrinth

The IG purports to show that it inherited its union-busting line from the ICL and is now upholding it against our "degeneration." To this end, its 5 July tome reproduced 13 quotes from *Espartaco*, newspaper of the GEM, and *WV* between 1987 and 1996. We only wish that readers would study these articles. They will not find a single statement to the effect that the PRI-affiliated unions are mere agencies of the bourgeois state. Nor will they find any refusal to defend their leaders against the state. As the GEM wrote in "Break with All Bourgeois Parties: PRI, PAN, PRD!" (*Espartaco* No. 14, Autumn-Winter 2000): "Given their conception of themselves as infallible *caudillos*, IG leaders Norden and Negrete imagine that, since they held this or that position behind the back of the party when they were still members of the ICL, theirs had to be 'the line' of our organization."

When confronted with the evidence, the IG opts for stealthy retreat. A case in point is that of Joaquín Hernández Galicia ("La Quina"), head of the PRI-affiliated SRTPRM oil workers union at the national PEMEX oil company. When "La Quina" was arrested in January 1989, we ran articles calling for his defense in both *WV* (with Norden as editor) and Spanish-language *Spartacist*. In the *WV* No. 1025 polemic we quoted a central point of those articles, which referred to the Soviet Union, not yet destroyed by capitalist counterrevolution:

> "The Trotskyists, who understand the class character of the USSR as a workers state despite its bureaucratic degeneration under Stalinist rule, and thus defend it against imperialism, likewise defend the unions against the bosses despite the sellout bureaucracy which sits atop these repositories of workers power.... Those who don't defend the Soviet Union also can't defend the oil workers union in Mexico."
>
> —*WV* No. 470, 3 February 1989

Those articles also quoted Leon Trutsky's statement from *In Defense of Marxism* (1939): "In the last analysis a workers' state is a trade union which has conquered power."

Casasola Archive

Ávila Camacho, soon to be Mexican president, speaking on platform of CTM labor congress, circa 1939. Corporatist CTM was integrated into government at its inception during regime of left-nationalist leader Làzaro Cárdenas.

Seventeen years after its founders defected from Trotskyism, the IG has finally repudiated these programmatic articles. But even the repudiation is dishonest and politically cowardly. The IG writes that the articles, "while correctly defending La Quina, wrongly equated the STPRM [sic] with U.S.-style unions" and were "ambiguous and contradictory" on the class nature of corporatist unions.

Like a squid sensing danger, the IG's natural reflex is to squirt a cloud of ink in order to cover its dash toward safety. Thus it tosses in the poisonous slanders that we defend death squads and have "aided and abetted" state repression against the IG—not even bothering to cook up the when, where and how of this "aid." Slander is the classic recourse of the politically bankrupt. Conscientious readers will not be fooled. As a subscriber wrote in a July 22 letter to *WV*: "Most noticeably, the IG completely ducks the Russian Question in their article." The writer continued:

> "If the installed leaders of the corporatist unions in Mexico are, as the IG writes, thuggish, murderous, pro-capitalist strike-breakers (and they are) then why were the Russian Stalinists, who murdered Trotsky and the core of the Bolshevik Party, who slaughtered more workers than 'La Maestra' [Gordillo] has ever known, not thrown in the same sack as her? By all accounts, the actions of the Stalinists, in Russia and internationally, did far more harm to the working-class than any of the *charro* leaders in Mexico."

What about the analogy with U.S. unions? Like garden-variety Latin American nationalists, the IG gringo-baits the ICL while performing quite a facelift on the imperialist-bribed American union bureaucrats. The IG writes that "with supreme imperialist arrogance (and ignorance) [the Spartacists] claim that Mexico is no different than the U.S., that 'unions' with death squads killing scores of their members (over 100 teachers in Oaxaca alone) are the same as the Teamsters under Jimmy Hoffa." Well, Jimmy Hoffa was no Quaker. More generally, for the IG the AFL-CIO's help in engineering bloody coups throughout Latin America, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of workers and peasants, is small change compared to the SNTE tops' murderous violence. And then there is the AFL-CIO bureaucracy's promotion and funding of "free trade unions" in East Europe—centrally Polish Solidarność in the 1980s, which spearheaded capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet bloc.

"Ambiguous and Contradictory": The IG's Lingering Claims to Trotskyism

The claim that the ICL ever held the IG's anti-union line is simply laughable. The ICL's Mexican section was consolidated through the July 1990 fusion of the GEM and the Fracción Trotskista (FT), made up of former leaders of the then Partido Obrero Socialista (POS—today the Liga de Trabajadores por el Socialismo). They were expelled from that Morenoite organization because of their solidarity with the ICL's unflinching defense of the USSR and the deformed workers states against the rising forces of capitalist counterrevolution and with our call for proletarian political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracies. And defense of "La Quina" as a concrete implementation of a proletarian class stand played an important role in the fusion process and the political arming of the GEM, in contradistinction to the bulk of the Mexican left, which refused to defend him with essentially the same arguments now wielded by the IG.

The May 1990 document "Main Points of Agreement" between the ICL and the FT—a comprehensive statement—provided a concise basis, together with the FT's own Platform, to move toward fusion. Point Nine of the document reads:

> "Defense of the labor unions against the attack of the bourgeois state, as in the case of the 'bazukazo' against 'La Quina' and the PEMEX workers union (historically one of the strongest trade unions in Mexico). This doesn't mean 'political support' to such bureaucratic leaders but a clear class position: complete independence of the unions from the bourgeois state. Condemn the capitulation to the Mexican government made by the [Mandelite] PRT and the PTZ [predecessor of the POS] during those events. Fight for revolutionary leadership of the unions; for trade-union fractions on the basis of the Transitional Program."

The IG's Negrete played a key role in writing this document and in the GEM-FT fusion as a whole. But that was then.

Having repudiated the ***class basis*** on which the ICL defended "La Quina," how can the IG still claim that defense of this PRI gangster was correct? The IG elucidates: "When La Quina was arrested, it was absolutely necessary to defend him and demand his release, because in going after him, [then PRI president Carlos] Salinas was targeting a leader who had partially broken from the corporatist system, not-so-secretly supporting [PRD founding leader Cuauhtémoc] Cárdenas in the 1988 presidential elections."

That's what it takes, then, to at least partially "break from the corporatist system" and to go from a police agency to a (semi?) genuine trade union: support the PRD. We will stick with Trotsky. In his 1940 essay "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay," Trotsky encapsulated the guiding principles in the struggle to transform the unions into instruments of revolutionary struggle—in Mexico and other capitalist societies—as "complete and unconditional independence of the trade unions in relation to the capitalist state" and "trade union democracy." In regard to *all* unions, this means a fight to oust the pro-capitalist bureaucrats on the basis of opposition to all bourgeois parties. ■

Snake Oil...

(continued from page 5)

Zhongyi (Criticize Chinese Medicine).

The bureaucracy's campaign against Falun Gong is entirely in the framework of nationalism. The anti-woman and anti-gay filth spouted by the group is not highlighted. And the kind of anti-materialist, traditionalist crap pushed by the likes of Falun Gong always goes along with attacks on the gains of the revolution made by women.

In the wake of Falun Gong and the SARS epidemic, some of the marketization of medical care has been reversed. But it still remains unaffordable for masses of people. While polls have shown that the majority of the population believes in traditional cures, most say they would choose so-called Western medicine for themselves.

Traditional medicine is written into the constitution of the country: "The state develops medical and health services, promotes modern medicine and traditional Chinese medicine." In *Chinese Medicine in Contemporary China* (2002), Volker Scheid writes:

> "Some of my teachers had studied Western medicine before becoming Chinese medical physicians or had undertaken extensive postgraduate training in biomedical specialities. One had studied Kampo, the Japanese variation of Chinese medicine; another Uigur medical practices. Some regularly practiced meditation or other body techniques to strengthen their *qi* and enhance their healing powers. One doctor took me to his spiritual master, a senior monk at a Beijing Buddhist temple, who writes out prescriptions under the telepathic guidance of Hua Tuo (?-203), a famous physician of the Three Kingdoms period. Another asked me to accompany him to make offerings to Sun Simiao (c. 581-682), a Tang dynasty physician who is venerated as the 'King of Medicine' (*yaowang*) at the White Cloud Temple (*Baiyunsi*) in the south of Beijing."

What he's describing is in ***state-sector*** medicine, not the very large sector that does not receive state support because it is based on "feudal superstitions"!

Despite the huge strides made by the revolution that overthrew capitalism, the program of building socialism in one country is an obstacle to removing the material basis for all kinds of religious obscurantism, as the persistence of medical quackery as well as the state-backed revival of Confucianism in China shows. The Stalinist CCP's nationalist distortion of Marxism led it to give a scientific gloss to ancient Chinese superstitions. The utopian "abolishing" of religion and superstition during the Cultural Revolution did nothing to remove its fundamental material basis: scarcity. And when "market reforms" made previously free health care unaffordable for masses of people, many turned to the cheaper traditional cures. The promotion within the medical and scientific establishment of concepts like qi and herbal cures balancing yin and yang spawned a mass, imperialist-backed counterrevolutionary movement. Only Trotskyism—the real continuity of the Chinese Communist Party at its founding—can point the way forward with its program of world proletarian revolution, the one road to achieving a socialist society of material abundance. ■

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Egypt: For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

Part Two
The Bankruptcy of Bourgeois Nationalism

Part One of this article appeared in WV *No. 1027 (12 July).*

By the end of the 19th century, there were stirrings in Egypt of struggle for independence from British rule as well as for basic rights for women. But it was the proletarian October Revolution of 1917 in Russia that galvanized mass struggle for social and national emancipation in Egypt and elsewhere in the colonial and semicolonial world and inspired workers internationally in the fight to overthrow capitalist rule.

Under the leadership of Lenin's Bolsheviks, the workers of Russia rallied behind them the peasant masses and seized state power. The Revolution overthrew bourgeois rule, sweeping away the tsarist autocracy and the state church, and pulled Russia out of the interimperialist carnage of World War I. In the course of a bloody three-year Civil War against imperialist-backed counterrevolutionary White armies, Soviet power was extended to largely Muslim Central Asia. The workers state's victories there held out the possibility of emancipation for the downtrodden masses of the Muslim East, especially women. An Egyptian observer reported at the time that "news of success or victory by the Bolsheviks" in the Russian Civil War "seems to produce a pang of joy and content among all classes of Egyptians" (quoted in Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq* [1978]).

Shortly after the seizure of power, the Bolsheviks, true to their word, published secret treaties from the tsarist archives. Among these was the 1916 Sykes-Picot treaty in which Britain and France agreed to carve up the Ottoman Empire between themselves, notwithstanding their promises of self-determination to the Arab subjects of the Ottoman sultan. The revelations helped fuel a series of national revolts and popular uprisings from North Africa and the Near East to South and East Asia.

In Egypt, a group of nationalist politicians led by one Saad Zaghlul formed a delegation (Wafd) to present a petition calling for Egypt's independence at the 1919 Versailles Conference, where the victorious imperialist powers were dictating terms to defeated Germany following the end of World War I. When Egypt's British occupiers responded by arresting Zaghlul and sending him into exile, the country exploded in strikes and protests. As a result of the massive upheaval, Britain agreed to putative independence—with conditions that left military control of the country and the Suez Canal in British hands. In 1924, the Wafd formed a government under a constitution imposed by the British.

Bibliotheca Alexandrina

1919: Egyptians at public funeral honoring those who died in clashes with British forces during revolt against colonial rule.

The 1919 revolt marked the decisive entry of the working class into Egyptian political life. In 1919, under British prompting, Egypt's Grand Mufti, Sheik Mohammed Bakheit, issued a *fatwa* against Bolshevism. Delighted, the British published it far and wide. But this backfired as it piqued the interest of the population in something so deeply hated by their brutal colonial overlords.

In 1921, the Egyptian Socialist Party was founded, becoming a section of the Communist International in 1922 and changing its name to the Communist Party of Egypt. The party played a leading role in organizing the newly militant working class, including in the industrial districts of Alexandria and Mahalla al-Kobra. One of the party's leaders, Joseph Rosenthal, a Russian Jew who had become a naturalized Egyptian citizen, organized the General Union of Workers. By 1923 the union had 20,000 members. The party's program called for the nationalization of the Suez Canal, repudiation of all state debts and capitulation agreements with foreign powers and an eight-hour workday.

When the Wafd came to power in 1924, one of its first campaigns was to savagely crush a series of militant strikes demanding shorter hours, higher wages and improved working conditions. Saad Zaghlul's government declared the strikers "transgressors and outlaws" and went after the Communists with a vengeance, interning the entire leadership and deporting foreign-born Communists. The pro-Communist Confederation of Trade Unions was disbanded and a series of anti-labor laws was introduced. As a result of intense repression, by 1925 the Communist Party had effectively disappeared as an organization, later re-emerging in a period marked by the Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet Union and the Comintern.

International Institute of Social History

Left: Red Army soldiers celebrate first anniversary of Russian Revolution, Moscow, 1918. Above: Azeri Communists paint slogans for Communist International's 1920 Congress of the Peoples of the East held in Baku.

Nasser and the Myth of "Arab Socialism"

The end of World War II triggered a renewed upsurge in the nationalist movement in late 1945 and early '46. By that time, the Wafd was a spent force, discredited and weakened because of its failure to end British occupation. The upheaval was marked by huge strikes involving textile workers, transport workers, Suez Canal and Alexandria port workers and many others. In this cauldron of social struggle, the Communist-influenced National Committee of Workers and Students (NCWS) as well as the left-nationalist Wafdist Vanguard attracted mass followings. The government under King Farouk clamped down heavily on protesters in February 1946, when British armored vehicles drove into crowds, killing many.

Leading Egyptian Communist Henri Curiel described the period as one in which the "masses were still ready to follow us. But we no longer knew where to lead them" (Gilles Perrault, *A Man Apart* [1987]). The emergence of the NCWS, the growing militancy of the student movement and the radicalization of the Wafdist Vanguard all spoke to the revolutionary potential pregnant in this upsurge. In 1951, trade unions organized demonstrations calling for cancellation of all treaties with the British, extension of democratic liberties, abolition of the political police and friendship with the Soviet Union. It was becoming increasingly clear that the ruling class was incapable of solving the political and economic crisis of Egyptian society.

The 1952 military coup led by Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser and his Free Officers Movement, which overthrew King Farouk, was meant to stabilize the country and stem the tide of the upsurge. The U.S. ambassador in Cairo predicted that the new junta could "save Egypt from the red tide" (quoted in Raymond Flower, *From Napoleon to Nasser* [2011]). One of the Free Officers' first acts upon coming to power was the grisly public execution of two leaders of a textile workers strike. They were arrested, condemned to death for "a grave crime against the state" and hanged on factory grounds. The Communists were banned, strikes were outlawed and a corporatist regime was set up to place the trade unions under state control.

Initially, Nasser's Free Officers leaned toward the Western imperialists, who promised economic aid and financing for the construction of the Aswan High Dam. But the trickle of funds from the U.S. fell far short of what Nasser had anticipated. Frustrated, he appealed to the Soviet Union, souring relations with the West. In 1956, Egypt nationalized the Suez Canal, which generated revenues on the order of $100 million annually.

Eager to make Nasser pay for this affront to their interests, Britain and France invaded Egypt, with Israel as a junior partner. But the invaders were forced to withdraw under pressure from the Soviets as well as from the U.S., which feared that its imperialist rivals would reoccupy a region it wished to dominate.

Standing up to the tripartite invasion won Nasser, with his nationalist rhetoric and socialist pretensions, wide adherence throughout the Near East and beyond. In the Spartacist tendency's first article on the Near East in 1968, at a time when much of the Western left was hailing Nasser as a revolutionary, we addressed this myth:

> "In the absence of a viable national bourgeoisie, many ex-colonial countries have seen the development of single-party dictatorships—led by the civil and military intelligentsia, based on national and social demagoguery—which seek to build the economic and social base for native capitalist exploitation. To do this in the face of world imperialism and domestic underdevelopment requires central control and the nationalization of major sectors. But statification of the economy by a bourgeois regime in no sense alters the capitalist character of a society. In this case it is merely symptomatic of the underdevelopment of the economies involved."
>
> —"Arab-Israeli Conflict: Turn the Guns the Other Way," *Spartacist* No. 11, March-April 1968

Nasser carried out an extensive nationalization of industry that allowed increased opportunities for employment, expansion of education, free health care and increased social benefits. Nasser's limited land reform, intended to pressure large landowners to invest in nationalized industry, rallied poor peasants behind him, though it affected less than 10 percent of the cultivable land. Billions in Soviet aid were instrumental in furthering industrial development, including the gigantic Aswan High Dam, and helped improve the standard of living for sections of the population. Women benefited from job opportunities and education and were granted the right to vote—whatever that meant under military rule. Free birth control was made available through thousands of family planning centers, part of the regime's aim to control population growth, which was straining the country's limited resources.

By the mid 1960s, however, Egypt was in deep economic crisis. The promised prosperity never materialized. Instead, the "workers' socialist gains" were served up in the form of IMF-dictated austerity measures delivered through rifle butts as widespread sit-ins and wildcat strikes were suppressed. Israel's swift victory in the June 1967 Six Day War left the armies of Egypt, Syria and Jordan shattered and large parts of their territories occupied by Israel. This humiliating defeat exposed the fragile foundations of Nasser's bourgeois regime and triggered an explosive mass reaction. Demonstrations of workers and students engulfed the country from Alexandria to Aswan. The regime was so discredited that Nasser's right-hand man and army chief, Abdel Hakim Amer, committed suicide. Nasser himself offered to resign. The 1967 defeat signaled the downward spiral of Nasser's "Arab socialism" scheme, though he did not live to see its final demise at the hands of his successor, Anwar el-Sadat.

Nasser was a bourgeois-nationalist strongman of the era when the U.S.-led Cold War against the Soviet Union allowed him some latitude to maneuver and seek funding from one side or the other (or, in Nasser's case, both). Still, Nasser could not free Egypt from the control of the imperialists or transform the country into an industrial power. As the failure of both the Wafd and Nasser regimes testify, the indigenous bourgeoisies of the colonial and semicolonial world are incapable of achieving qualitative modernization in the imperialist epoch.

Beltmann

Amid anti-colonial ferment, woman gives political speech on Cairo street, 1919.

Stalinist Betrayal over Nasser

By the time Communism had again become a factor in the Egyptian working class in the early 1940s, the Soviet Union had undergone a political counterrevolution, bringing to power a parasitic bureaucratic caste led by J.V. Stalin. The Stalinists repudiated the Bolshevik program of international socialist revolution in favor of the nationalist dogma of "building socialism in one country." This was a flat denial of the Marxist understanding that socialism—a society in which class divisions disappear in conditions of material abundance—can be built only on an international basis through destroying capitalist imperialism as a world system and surpassing its level of technological/industrial development and productivity.

The Stalinist bureaucracy's search for "peaceful coexistence" with world imperialism—a corollary of "socialism in one country"—led to the transformation of the Communist International from an instrument for world proletarian revolution into an agency for Soviet diplomatic maneuvers. But while the Stalinists had betrayed the program of the October Revolution, they had not overturned the socialized foundations of the Soviet workers state. While calling for workers political revolution to oust the bureaucracy, Trotskyists remained steadfast in unconditional military defense of the degenerated workers state against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution as part of their revolutionary proletarian internationalist program.

The Stalinists, searching for allies among the emerging bourgeoisies of the colonial and neocolonial world, resurrected the old social-democratic/Menshevik formula of "two-stage revolution." This meant supporting an allegedly "progressive" or "anti-imperialist" national bourgeoisie—in fact, a class of brutal exploiters—while postponing proletarian revolution to the indefinite future, i.e., never. As seen as early as 1927 with the crushing defeat of the Second Chinese Revolution, which was sealed by the Guomindang (Nationalist) party's massacre of tens of thousands of Communists and other militants, the end result is not "democracy," much less socialism, but defeat after defeat for the toiling masses and the slaughter of leftists, workers and peasants. The Soviet bureaucracy sacrificed Communist parties around the world in pursuit of alliances with bourgeois "anti-imperialists."

In the anti-colonial struggles of the 1940s in Egypt, the refounded Communist organizations were supported by the dominant and most militant sections of the working class. But the Stalinists' program subordinated the proletariat's class interests to bourgeois nationalism. Pro-Soviet and anti-Zionist, the movement was greatly shaken when, after two decades of conciliating and promoting Arab nationalism, Stalin changed tack and supported the United Nations' partition of Palestine and the creation of the Zionist state of Israel. Compelled to endorse the partition plan, the Egyptian Communists suffered a serious erosion of influence.

In the wake of the partition, confronted with an explosive climate of inflamed nationalism and anti-Semitic pogroms, the Stalinists adapted to the reactionary tide. The Communist organizations had been built largely through the efforts of Jews like Henri Curiel, who founded the Egyptian Movement for National Liberation, which fused with another group in 1947 to become the Democratic Movement for National Liberation (DMNL). DMNL militants had courageously defended Jewish shops against pogromist mobs incited by the Muslim Brotherhood. But in 1949, when a new Communist Party of Egypt was formed out of a merger of a DMNL faction and other groups, it excluded Jews—and women—to avoid "sexual dissolution, moral dissolution," in the words of Fuad Mursi, one of its founding members. The number of Jews in the movement began to decline, largely the result of the deportations of leftists, among them Curiel, who was deported to Italy in 1950.

Nasser's repression of the working class and his virulent anti-Communism did not prevent the Egyptian Stalinists from pledging their full support to him, claiming he would achieve the tasks of the "national democratic revolution." "The fact is," one Communist leader would later say, "that we and the others all met on the platform of fascination with Nasserism" (quoted in Tareq Y. Ismael and Rifa'at El-Sa'id, *The Communist Movement in Egypt: 1920-1988* [1990]). Even with many of them jailed, tortured and executed, the Stalinists continued to foster illusions in the "anti-imperialist" leader. Prominent Communist Shuhdi al-Shafʿie continued to support Nasser even while being bludgeoned and hauled to his death. Meanwhile, Moscow continued to lavish arms and funds on Nasser as he repressed the working class and persecuted Communists.

In 1965, the Communist Party capped its capitulation to the regime by formally dissolving itself and liquidating into Nasser's Arab Socialist Union (ASU). In a telegram to Nasser, who had just been "re-elected" president, the party declared that "the most beautiful thing we present to you on this historic occasion" was the news that its representatives had just decided to "put an end to their independent organization because of their belief in your call for the unity of all the socialist forces in one revolutionary political organization, and that this one party under your leadership is the substitute for our independent organization" (quoted in *The Communist Movement in Egypt: 1920-1988*).

Dissolving their party and joining Nasser's ASU was consistent with the Stalinists' historic orientation. The various organizations in Egypt at the time that claimed to be communist shared the perspective of two-stage revolution from their inception, seeing the national struggle as their primary political task. Never promoters of working-class independence, they politically chained the proletariat to bourgeois nationalist forces. Nasser succeeded in isolating the Communists by implementing the nationalist core of their program—ending British occupation, land reform, nationalization, promoting government-controlled economic planning—as well as alliance with the Soviet Union. This was passed off in Stalinist jargon as "the non-capitalist road." Even as he destroyed their organizations physically and politically, Nasser used the Communists as propagandists and consultants.

The year 1965 saw the annihilation of another Communist party on the eastern

continued on page 10

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Gamma-Keystone

Above: Textile workers in Kafr al-Dawwar rounded up outside factory by police and troops under Gamal Abdel Nasser following strike, 1952. Right: Nasser acclaimed by Cairo crowd after signing accord formalizing departure of British troops, October 1954.

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Egypt, Women...

(continued from page 9)

end of the Islamic belt. In one of the most savage massacres in modern history, over a million Indonesian Communists, workers, peasants, intellectuals and sympathizers, along with ethnic Chinese, were slaughtered at the hands of General Suharto and Islamic reactionaries with the direct aid of the CIA. Here was, once again, the bloody result of "two-stage revolution." The Indonesian Communist Party—then the largest in the capitalist world—had paved the way for the massacre by pledging its full support to the "progressive" nationalist regime of Sukarno, disarming the workers as part of a policy of "national unity" with the Indonesian bourgeoisie and its military. Deceived and disoriented, the working class could neither defend itself nor come to the rescue of its leaders when reactionary military leaders turned on them. (See "Lessons of Indonesia 1965," *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 55, Autumn 1999.)

Ostensible Trotskyists and "Arab Socialism"

Also seizing on Nasser's "Arab socialism" was a trend of political revisionism that began to assert itself in the Trotskyist Fourth International under the leadership of Michel Pablo in the early 1950s. According to this revisionist current, various non-revolutionary forces around the world—from Stalinists to social democrats to Third World nationalists—were propelled by events to take a revolutionary course, thus negating the need for Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard parties. In the Near East, Nasser and other militarists were painted as liberators of the Arab working class and peasants, with the role of "Trotskyists" relegated to that of their cheering section. In 1965, Livio Maitan, a leader of the Pablolte "United Secretariat of the Fourth International," proposed that countries like Egypt that had carried out extensive nationalizations could become workers states without a social revolution.

Gerry Healy's International Committee (whose descendants today operate as the Socialist Equality Party of David North) initially appeared to be orthodox defenders of Trotskyism, sharply attacking the liquidationist politics of the Pabloites. But by 1967, they were also enthusing over the "Arab Revolution," eventually carrying this to its logical outcome hy acting as paid press agents and finger-men for one or another Arab bourgeois regime. In that capacity, Healy & Co. hailed the 1978 execution of 21 members of the Iraqi Communist Party. (See, for example, "Northite Blood Money," *WV* No. 523, 29 March 1991.)

The Spartacist tendency emerged out of the struggle against the Pabloite degeneration of the historic party of American Trotskyism, the Socialist Workers Party, and went on to break with Healy & Co. over their own revisionism. As we have always insisted, the idea of a trans-class "Arab Revolution" was a mystification that impeded the task of forging Trotskyist parties as the necessary leadership for proletarian revolution—the only road to national and social emancipation.

Feminism: Obstacle to Women's Liberation

While the modernizing impulse of the early nationalist movement in Egypt placed the question of women's emancipation on the agenda, the bourgeois-nationalist leadership's developing hostility to women's equality would help spur the rise of a distinct feminist current. Women's liberation first became an issue in Egypt in the nationalist ferment at the end of the 19th century. In 1894, a Coptic lawyer, Murqus Fahmi, puhlished a book titled *The Woman in the East*. Criticizing Copts and Muslims for secluding women, he attributed Egypt's backwardness to the conditions of women and the family. Another early proponent of women's rights was Qasim Amin, a lawyer and appellate court judge of Kurdish stock. He called for abolishing the veil, giving women primary education and reforming laws governing polygamy and divorce. Amin's proposed reforms were modest and colored by a cautious definition of Islamic practice rather than its abandonment. Nonetheless, they evoked a storm of attacks from other nationalists and religious leaders.

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Members of youth wing of Indonesian Communist Party rounded up by soldiers in Jakarta, 1965. Military coup unleashed slaughter of over a million Communists, ethnic Chinese and others.

Amin was inspired by his experiences as a student in France, where he had been exposed to the writings of Charles Darwin and Karl Marx. In his works, namely *The Liberation of Women* (1899) and *The New Woman* (1900), he espoused a Western model of development. Arguing that there can be no improvement of the state of the nation without improving the position of women, Amin concluded that their liberation was a prerequisite for the liberation of Egypt from foreign domination.

In contrast, Mustafa Kamil, founder in the 1890s of the short-lived National Party, opposed women's rights as a diversion from the struggle against British domination, a "fôreign" idea identified with Western culture. While Amin stood for a slow withdrawal of British domination and the buildup of a native Egyptian ruling class, Kamil appealed to the Ottomans for aid in expelling the British. The aim of these early nationalists was to remove the obstacles to the exploitation of Egyptian toilers by a native ruling class. They accepted the class structure of society and the institution of the family as they existed, proposing limited reforms at most.

Women became a visible factor of political life during the 1919 upheavals. Facing off against armed British soldiers, some 300 veiled women organized by Huda Shaarawi poured into the streets of Cairo to protest the arrest of Wafd leaders. The daughter of a wealthy slaveowner and the wife of a leading Wafd member, Shaarawi was one of Egypt's first feminists. In her autobiography, *Harem Years*, she recounted coming of age among the upper and middle classes, where the sexes were kept apart. Guarded by castrated slaves, women were secluded at home and carried their seclusion with them when they went out by veiling their faces. Shaarawi is best known for her dramatic public unveiling in 1923 at the Cairo Railroad Station upon her return from a feminist conference in Rome, the first time an Egyptian woman had shunned tradition so visibly.

Around that time, Shaarawi founded the Egyptian Feminist Union (EFU), a classic bourgeois feminist formation. Made up primarily of women from wealthy and prominent families, its goal was to seek equal rights within the confines of existing class society. The EFU sought to reform personal status laws (marriage, divorce, custody, etc.), win the vote and the right to hold office, establish educational opportunities and secure other reforms that, while supportable, posed no threat to Islam or the institution of the family. Shaarawi died in 1947.

One of Shaarawi's admirers, Durriyyah Shafiq, founded the organization Bint al-Nil ("Daughter of the Nile") in 1948, amid the upheavals that engulfed the country after World War II. Bint al-Nil's leaders were more militant than their EFU mentors. In 1951, Shafiq led 1,500 women in a demonstration that stormed the parliament, demanding political rights, equal pay and reform of the divorce laws. This action provoked outrage among Islamic conservatives who petitioned the king to keep women within their prescribed bounds. After she staged a hunger strike against Nasser's dictatorship in 1957, Shafiq was placed under house arrest and her organization was banned. Her associates distanced themselves, calling her a "traitor to the revolution." Isolated and demoralized, she committed suicide in 1975.

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IAW

Durriyyah Shafiq, fourth from left, with other hunger strikers demanding inclusion of women in constituent assembly, 1954. Inset: Huda Shaarawi, founder of Egyptian Feminist Union.

For a time, the Communist movement carried out special work among women. In the period after WWII, the NCWS included the Association of Egyptian Working Women, the first such organization in Egypt, headed by Communist textile worker Hikmat al-Ghazzali from the Shubra al-Khayma mill. Communists also launched the League of Women Students and Graduates from the University and Egyptian Institutes, which proclaimed that freedom for women "cannot arrive under the shadow of the imperialist" nor "under the shadow of enslavement and exploitation" (quoted in Selma Botman, "Women's Participation in Radical Egyptian Politics 1939-1952," in *Women in the Middle East* [1987]). However, for the Stalinists the question of women's emancipation was subordinate to unity with the nationalists. They subsequently neglected this work, leaving the feminists unchallenged as defenders of women's rights.

Nawal El Saadawi, a heroic fighter against women's oppression, lays hare the heinous conditions of women in Muslim Arab society in her writings. She has been sacked, imprisoned, forced into exile and featured on fundamentalists' death lists. However, while Saadawi in *The Hidden Face of Eve* recognized the "patriarchal class system that has dominated the world since thousands of years" as a root of women's oppression, she rejects the understanding that eliminating that oppression requires the overthrow of the class system. As the book makes clear, she sees the struggle through the prism of feminism, as one of women against men. According to Saadawi, "the real reason why women have been unable to complete their emancipation" is that "they have failed to constitute themselves into a political force powerful, conscious, and dynamic enough to impose their rights." This ignores the fundamental *class* divide in capitalist society: Hosni Mubarak's wife Suzanne, who postured as a champion of women's rights, and the textile workers of Mahalla al-Kobra stand on opposite sides of that divide.

Saadawi rejects the Marxist understanding of the working class as the motor force for historical progress. Searching for another agent has sometimes led her to support the very forces that oppress women. As well as serving for a time as a cabinet member in Sadat's government, she supported Khomeini's Islamic "revolution" in Iran in 1978-79. In her 1979 preface to the English edition of *The Hidden Face of Eve*, Saadawi vilified those in the West who accused the mullahs' "revolution" of "being reactionary, of imposing on women the veil and the *chador*." She claimed, "The Iranian Revolution has lifted the banners of Islam overhead, as banners of freedom from imperialist oppression."

As we will detail in Part Three of this article, Khomeini's movement made no secret of its reactionary program. More than a decade after it took power, long after leftists, union militants, Kurdish nationalists and others had been imprisoned and slaughtered by the Islamic regime, Saadawi along with numerous other feminists and self-styled socialists cynically backtracked on their support for Khomeini. She acknowledged that "Khomeini was terrible," lamely claiming that the "revolution" had been "aborted" by the "colonial powers," who are "much happier with a religious, fanatic revolution than a socialist revolution" (*Progressive*, April 1992).

While often courageous and defiant, bourgeois feminists can offer nothing to the deeply oppressed and exploited women of the working class and peasantry. Because it accepts class society, from which the oppression of women springs, feminism is incapable of attaining women's emancipation. In late 2011, half a century after Nasser dissolved it, the EFU was revived. Now it seeks to "find powerful Egyptian women and convince them to run for election" (London *Guardian*, 1 December 2011). Tellingly, the EFU publication, *L'Egyptienne*, is puhlished in French, accessihle only to a narrow sliver of upper-class women.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

Free Jeremy Forrest!

Britain: Teacher Jailed in Anti-Sex Witchhunt

The following article is reprinted with a minor factual correction from Workers Hammer *No. 223 (Summer 2013), the newspaper of our comrades of the Spartacist League/Britain.*

WORKERS HAMMER

British society is obsessed with sex—or, more precisely, obsessed with making sure that certain people are not having sex. In the media onslaught of sex scandals, every week brings a new crisis. The gutter press's frenzy *du jour* is over Jeremy Forrest, a young teacher who had the misfortune of reciprocating the love of a teenage student. Forrest, who was 30 at the time, entered into a consensual relationship with a 15-year-old. After receiving warnings from the school and then visits from the police, the two fled to France to be together—which is ludicrously being spun into a tale of "abduction." For his so-called crimes, Forrest has been sentenced to five and a half years in prison on five counts of sexual activity with a "child."

One of the vilest elements in Forrest's case is the treatment of the woman, now 16, not by the teacher who allegedly "damaged" her, but by the state and its media flunkies. Supposedly for her protection, her lover has been imprisoned, she has been deemed unable to take responsibility for her own actions and had her most intimate affairs spun into front-page news. No normal person would seek this "protection." The young woman has insisted that she initiated the relationship and that she loves Forrest and wishes to continue her relationship with him: "Running away is what I wanted to do. I wasn't under any pressure from Jeremy. I wasn't forced. It was my decision" (thesun.co.uk, 30 June). Now the police are investigating whether Forrest colluded, via a third party, to influence her testimony. Apparently the "poor confused" woman's opinion is of no consequence.

Unlike the hysterical bourgeois press, we do not believe that merely being older, or having a better job, or a so-called position of authority, enables someone to cast a spell on young people and turn them into sex-crazed automatons unaccountable for their actions. For Marxists the guiding principle in sexual relations is *effective consent*: what two (or more) people agree to do, without coercion, is no business of the state. Likewise, we oppose all laws against "crimes without victims" such as prostitution, drug use or pornography. These state-dictated, puritanical restrictions on human behaviour leave the lives of innocent people in tatters.

Old and New Edinburgh (Cassell and Company)

"The Repentance Stool" from Old Greyfriars Church, Edinburgh. Presbyterians used the stool for those who offended "morality."

Forrest, a man with a promising career who by all accounts was a very good teacher and very caring, is now being branded a "paedophile" who "groomed" his "victim." After serving his sentence, he is to be banned from teaching and listed on the Sex Offenders Register. Forrest is one of numerous teachers who have been hounded out of jobs and even jailed for consensual sex. For a close and sexual relationship with a 15-year-old student in 2009, music teacher Helen Goddard spent 15 months behind bars. In 2006, William Gibson was suspended from teaching maths when his 1980 conviction for indecent assault came to light—a conviction based on his relationship with a pupil who he had gone on to marry and have three children with. The ordeals inflicted on these individuals are reminiscent of Christian trials of sin whereby a charge of adultery or fornication could see the offender stood barefoot in sackcloth on the public stool of repentance, sometimes every Sunday for years. "Harlots" would be driven out of town after a ducking in "the deepest and foulest pool of the town."

Book by Peter Fryer defined prudery as "interference in other people's pleasures." From Britain to U.S., teen sex is major target of modern-day Puritans.

As bourgeois politicians turn the screws of austerity ever tighter, laying waste to working people, sex scaremongering grows in proportion. The irrational fear that sexual predators lurk behind every corner is exploited to falsely present the capitalist state as a defender of young people and women, and to feed socially conservative attitudes—and the charge of paedophilia whips Britain into a fervour unlike any other. The capitalist class's feigned concern for child welfare is a sick joke, as attested by the hundreds of youth arrested in the aftermath of the 2011 London riots [sparked by a racist cop killing]. They were prosecuted at an unprecedented rate—despite being too young in the eyes of the law to make independent decisions! The young offenders' jails are bursting at the seams, while the government slashes funding for childcare, schools, hospitals, and benefits.

There are certainly damaged individuals capable of atrocities. But in contrast to the aggressive prosecution of "age of consent" violations in which no one is harmed, the prospects of justice are bleak for victims of actual rape, who are harassed by the police and put on trial themselves as the courts scrutinise their morals. In the bourgeois legal system, the prosecution of sexual offences has little to do with protecting women against violence. The laws exist for the protection of women as *property*, based on the moral code embodied in the institution of the family. The real crime in patriarchal societies of all kinds is that the woman is "defiled"; her value as a "pure" transmission belt for the inheritance of private property is damaged.

This goes to the crux of women's oppression. The institution of the family, which the bourgeoisie uses to pass its property on to the next generation, is the source of women's oppression. For working people, it is the means through which running the household and rearing the next generation are relegated to women's "second shift," with children dependent on the whims of their parents and couples bound together by social pressure and economic need. The venomous anti-sex fear and repression that underlie bourgeois morality flow from the role of the family and also provide ideological reinforcement for it.

British society has long had a reputation for upholding the Victorian sexual standards, including the dual standard that, while men are naturally lecherous, "decent" women actually do not like sex (unless of course they've succumbed to "binge drinking"). Peter Fryer chronicled the attempts to force this moralism on the population in his book *Mrs. Grundy: Studies in English Prudery* (1963). He ridiculed the hypocrisy of self-appointed guardians of public morals, noting of their attempts to shut down strip shows that:

> "Ours is a culture in which most people say they find such exhibitions disgusting; though there are many who, if they had an opportunity of witnessing them without incurring opprobrium, would do so. Why it is less disgusting for men to enter marriage ignorant of the clitoris, or of its role in women's sexual pleasure, than for men to witness a demonstration of the clitoris being used to secure pleasure (from which they might conceivably learn how to give more pleasure to their wives) is not immediately apparent."

Criminalising consensual sexual activity has always been a war cry of the fire-and-brimstone religious types and other right-wing forces. However, Britain's feminists as well as reformists like the Socialist Party (SP) [affiliate of the Committee for a Workers' International] and [the International Socialist Tendency's] Socialist Workers Party (SWP) have also flocked to the cause of repression. The "Reclaim the Night" marches they trumpet, like the campaigns to censor stand-up comedy, impose stricter [pub] licensing laws, cover up "page three girls" [tabloid photo feature], etc, invoke the pretext of defending women to demand greater state powers, more policing, more proscriptions, more prison terms.

Most telling in this regard is the complicity of leftists and liberals in the imperialists' vendetta against Julian Assange. Both the SP and the SWP have given credence to allegations that Assange is a rapist and to the attempts to extradite him to Sweden, despite the fact that he has not even been charged! The Swedish government is seeking his extradition, not to face trial, but for "questioning" regarding allegations made by two women who, by their own accounts, had consensual sex with him. Assange's real crime, in the eyes of the U.S. government and their British and Swedish junior partners, was the release of hundreds of thousands of classified documents detailing the brutality of U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. What Assange's extradition might mean is suggested by the fate of U.S. Army intelligence analyst Bradley Manning. Detained in inhuman "pre-trial" conditions for more than three years, Manning is currently being tried by an American military court, where he faces life in prison for his genuinely heroic role in this WikiLeaks exposure.

Jeremy Forrest

The SP and the SWP, who so blithely enlisted in the witch hunt against Assange, evince an abiding faith in the capitalist state, which they entrust to "protect" women and children, as well as to regulate the sexual activity of youth. It's like calling on Jack the Ripper to guard a brothel. We demand: *Down with reactionary "age of consent" laws! Government out of the bedroom!* As revolutionary Marxists, we understand that ending the persecution of consensual sexual activity will require smashing the capitalist state and replacing it with one controlled by the workers. Then the task of reorganising society to meet human need can begin. A workers government would provide socialised childcare and kitchens as well as free access to quality healthcare, birth control and abortions. By removing the material need for the bourgeois family, socialism will render irrelevant the restrictive social norms that flow from it. Our defence of victims of puritanical witch hunts is a component part of our Marxist programme for women's liberation through socialist revolution. ***Free Jeremy Forrest! Down with the anti-sex witch hunt!*** ■

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Postal Workers...

(continued from page 3)

> going to jail if necessary, organizing mass support rallies, and appealing to other groups of workers. More than that, the postal workers need the active support of the entire labor movement.... If troops are brought in, the *entire* city labor movement must go out on strike."

The leaflet concluded by demanding the right to strike for all workers and calling for the working class to break with the Democrats and Republicans and build its own party.

Nixon figured out quickly that you can't sort the mail with bayonets. The Post Office Department quickly conceded wage increases and collective bargaining rights, with no reprisals. Not only was the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) formed out of the strike, but the postal wildcat helped spur the rapid growth of public sector unions in the 1970s. However, strikes by federal workers remained banned, and union officials increasingly used federal and state anti-strike laws, often including the threat of big fines and jail time for union leaders, as an excuse for shelving the strike weapon.

The labor bureaucracy's subservience to anti-labor laws led to a crushing defeat for all workers when the 1981 PATCO air traffic controllers strike was smashed. PATCO members were among those unionists who had been inspired by the 1970 postal strike, carrying out a number of job actions to win union recognition and better pay and working conditions prior to the decisive 1981 showdown with the government. Using plans drawn up by the Democratic Carter administration, Republican president Ronald Reagan moved to crush the strike he declared illegal. PATCO leaders were dragged off to jail in chains and military personnel were dispatched to help run the system.

With anger in the labor movement mounting against Reagan's strikebreaking, the SL called for the unions in the industry to shut down the airports in defense of PATCO. But the craven AFL-CIO officialdom refused any such course of action, and the union was busted. The postal union misleaders did their bit by rushing to accept a sellout contract rather than strike alongside PATCO. The government's smashing of PATCO ushered in a decades-long drive by the capitalists to gut the unions and drive down wages.

As giveback contracts and tiered wage scales increasingly became the norm, in 1984 postal workers were pressured to accept major contract concessions. Meanwhile, horrendous work conditions were leading to several cases of workers "going postal." Commenting on this phenomenon, a letter carrier wrote to *Workers Vanguard*:

> "There hasn't been a nationwide strike since 1970, and particularly since PATCO was busted in 1981...management has turned the screws ever tighter, getting more work out of fewer workers.... Forced overtime is a way of life.... Back and neck injuries are endemic.... In the absence of strike action and with our union bureaucrats selling us out in every conceivable way, the intense pressure and exploitation have driven some postal workers to desperate and crazy acts. What we really need is some hard class struggle. It'll take a workers revolution to sweep away our exploiters once and for all."
>
> —"The Post Office Drives You Crazy," *WV* No. 542, 10 January 1992

Begging Democrats, Rejecting Class Struggle

Postal workers today are weakened by being divided into many unions. The largest, with over 200,000 members each, are the NALC and the APWU, with smaller numbers in the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association and the National Postal Mail Handlers Union (part of the Laborers union). In 2011, the APWU agreed to a concessionary contract while keeping a no-layoff clause for six-year employees. The other three unions got similar contracts through binding arbitration.

Faced with a full-bore assault on jobs and benefits, the union officials have readily accepted a framework in which the only two choices posed are dismantling the postal service or keeping the post office intact by screwing the workers! Calling to "Save America's Postal Service," they pitch the problem as the postal service being uniquely and unfairly burdened by the legal requirements for funding these benefits. In thrall to the capitalist profit motive, the union tops complain that the mandate to "pre-fund" retiree health care prevents USPS from competing on level ground with private companies like UPS. They also object to the legal ban on developing new products like secure e-mail, which prevents the postal service from grabbing market share from Google.

AP

PATCO air traffic controllers union leaders hauled off in chains during 1981 strike. Smashing of PATCO set stage for decades of union-busting.

The kind of "struggle" offered by the leaders of the APWU and NALC is to beg the class enemy in Congress, wooing sympathetic Democrats whom they sell to the membership as "friends of labor," supplemented by the occasional street protest. Reformists like the International Socialist Organization and the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL) aid and abet these trade-union bureaucrats in their diversionary schemes. Both groups enthusiastically back Communities and Postal Workers United (CPWU), which was founded in May 2012 at a Chicago conference of *Labor Notes*, a social-democratic publication associated with the Solidarity organization.

CPWU has mainly organized public-relations stunts and civil disobedience actions in order to pressure USPS, Congress and the White House. Thus a four-day "D.C. Hunger Strike to Save the Post Office" in June 2012, heavily built by the PSL's ANSWER coalition, was centered on lobbying Congress. The PSL has even created a Web site, Justicefirst.org, where anyone can print out the placard "Saturday Delivery: The People Want It & It's the Law!"—a fair summation of the labor bureaucrats' cringing legalism.

To placate postal workers' anger, the NALC and other postal unions endorsed March 24 rallies to save Saturday mail delivery. Protests against budget cuts, closures and mail delay took place in 112 cities and drew thousands of union members. Held in out-of-the-way locations on a Sunday, when post offices are closed, these rallies exemplified the role of the reformists as water boys for the bureaucracy. At a rally in Maryland that his group helped organize, PSL leader Brian Becker stood shoulder to shoulder with APWU and NALC officials, who were only too happy to let the workers blow off some steam. Giving their efforts a faintly militant gloss, Becker paid lip service to the 1970 strike while neglecting to mention that this was a *wildcat* strike opposed by most union officials and deemed illegal by the state.

Budgetary shenanigans and outright thievery of workers' pensions and health benefits by the capitalists are nothing new. In the private sector, bankruptcy has long been a favorite method of airline, auto and coal bosses to dissolve union contracts and discharge pension and retiree health care obligations into thin air. States and municipalities have routinely underfunded pensions or stopped paying altogether in times of budgetary crisis—in Detroit today, this means leaving tens of thousands to twist in the wind. Meanwhile, Wall Street regularly scrapes the cream off the top of massive pension fund investments, to say nothing of profits derived from the 401(k) scam that has largely replaced defined-benefit pensions since the 1980s.

Throughout the labor movement, a new leadership is needed to chart a course of class struggle against the capitalists and their government. Fighting for such a leadership is a key part of building a workers party that can lead all the exploited and oppressed in sweeping away the racist capitalist order through socialist revolution. When those who labor rule, we can begin to rebuild this society through a planned, socialist economy for the benefit of all. ■

Manning...

(continued from page 16)

("Work of People's Commissariat for Education," 7 February 1921). In defense of the interests of *their* class, the government and its mouthpieces in the bourgeois press portray their opponents as criminal and/or of unsound mind. By its own perverse standards, what the ruling class considers normal is dropping atomic weapons, ordering drone attacks on civilians and unleashing the Lieutenant Calleys who burned down entire villages in Vietnam, and later the kill-crazy mercenaries in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The government's need to conduct its dirty work in secret and the subservience of the capitalist media to their masters made it a massive struggle simply to get the news about Manning's court-martial. Hundreds of journalists were denied media credentials by the Army, including those from *Workers Vanguard* who managed anyway to get into the Fort Meade courtroom to cover the initial part of the trial.

We are indebted to a few politically committed independent journalists, without whom little to nothing would be known about the dirty war against Manning. For a year and a half, Alexa O'Brien published the only available transcripts of the pre-trial proceedings. Her daily reports from the court-martial punctured the "managed obscurity" (her term), despite intimidation by armed soldiers snooping over her shoulder in Fort Meade's media pit. Daily trial reports by Nathan Fuller on the Bradley Manning Support Network's Web site and by Kevin Gosztola on the Firedoglake Web site have also been invaluable. Since the U.S. military refuses to release transcripts of the pre-trial hearings and court-martial, the Freedom of the Press Foundation raised funds to hire court stenographers for those sessions that were open to the public.

The Fraud of Bourgeois Democracy

In the wake of the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the U.S. vastly increased its security apparatuses to spy on, well, almost everyone. This created its own security nightmare for the ruling class. The Augean stables of classified information require armies of employees with digital trowels to move the crap around. Close to five million people have security clearances, of which more than 1.4 million are cleared for "top secret" material. Bradley Manning was one with the moral and political conscience to oppose what he discovered U.S. imperialism does every day all over the world, and he had the rare courage to act on his convictions, at great personal sacrifice. His act encouraged Edward Snowden to reveal PRISM—the National Security Agency's vacuuming of metadata from virtually everyone's e-mails and Web searches, in cahoots with corporations like Google, Microsoft and Facebook.

Snowden flew to Hong Kong to reveal the nefarious workings of the U.S. intelligence net and then spent more than a month in the transit zone of a Moscow airport while fighting for asylum, which Russia has granted him for one year. The spectacle of Attorney General Eric Holder, who presides over a justice system that massively incarcerates black people and railroads many to death row, promising Moscow that Snowden would not be tortured (like Bradley Manning) or face the death penalty, was a hoot. Here in the "belly of the beast," it is delightful to see U.S. imperialism get a black eye and have its pretensions to rule the world on behalf of "democracy" further exposed for the lie it is.

There has been vastly more outrage expressed by bourgeois "public opinion" over Snowden's revelations than Bradley Manning's because the former hits the wealthy where they live: their e-mails, their Internet search histories, the GPS data on their smart phones. By contrast, Manning was the lowly working-class soldier who was supposed to protect their class privileges by enforcing U.S. domination of the globe.

In These Times, a social-patriotic journal described by the Democratic Socialists of America as "DSA-ish," defended NSA spying and denounced Snowden. A July 2 article by Louis Nayman headlined "In Defense of PRISM" railed that a government contractor who runs with classified data to "regimes who fine, imprison and rub out public critics" is not a "People's Hero." This was a bit much even for the Democratic Party stalwarts of the DSA, which subsequently printed a polite rebuttal to Nayman, who is described as a longtime union organizer. We suggest that Mr. Nayman register as an agent of a foreign power in the labor movement—the capitalist class.

Daniel Ellsberg, who more than 40 years ago leaked the Pentagon Papers, exposing the lies designed to cover up what the U.S. was really doing in Vietnam, has laudably and energetically defended Bradley Manning. He expresses the views of civil libertarians who think that the prosecution of whistle-blowers damages U.S. prestige in the world and feel embarrassed by the protests of rival imperialist powers. Cold War liberal anti-Communism dripped from Ellsberg's article in the London *Guardian* (10 June), which, alluding to the East German state spy agency, was titled: "Edward Snowden: Saving Us from the United Stasi of America." Ellsberg has no fundamental problem with NSA spying; he just wants an informed public to pressure Congress to keep U.S. imperialism's bloodhounds on a somewhat shorter leash.

Liberals who uphold the fraud of U.S. "democracy" against Soviet-era and Stasi "totalitarianism" prettify the brutally violent rule of the rapacious U.S. ruling class that Bradley Manning exposed. As Marxists, we value and fight hard for democratic rights, which make it easier for labor and the oppressed to fight in their own interests. What the liberals will not tell you is that democratic rights are extended to the working class and poor as gains of arduous class and social struggles; they are not granted from on high by an enlightened ruling class. Moreover, democratic rights in capitalist society are ephemeral and can be taken away in an instant.

Liberal darling Franklin Delano Roosevelt interned Japanese Americans during World War II, adopting the racist argument that this "enemy race" would soon commit sabotage because they had not done so *yet*. Black Panther Party members Fred Hampton and Mark Clark were gunned down in Hampton's apartment in Chicago in 1969 for challenging systematic racist oppression. The same state persecution of anti-racist, anti-capitalist

Malcolm X on 1963 March:
"Farce on Washington"

Anger over the exoneration of Trayvon Martin's killer will no doubt swell attendance at the August 24 rally marking the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington. It is precisely the role of Al Sharpton and the other Democrats and preachers heading up the event to channel indignation over such atrocities into support for their program of trying to prod the U.S. government—the chief overseer of the racist capitalist system—to bring justice.

It is fitting that Sharpton & Co. are celebrating the 28 August 1963 March on Washington. Officially hailed as an iconic event of the civil rights movement, the March on Washington was expressly organized to enforce the domination of the "moderate" leaders over the massive and convulsive battles for black rights. Dubbed the "farce on Washington" by Malcolm X, the event was organized in collaboration with the Kennedy White House, which wanted to stop any militant struggle in its tracks as well as to corral votes for the Democratic Party.

The main immediate aim of the March on Washington was to get a civil rights bill passed through pressuring President Kennedy. But when Kennedy called the "representative leaders" into the Oval Office, they quickly found out who was calling the shots. The destination of the march was changed from the White House to the Lincoln Memorial. March leaders deleted a "statement to the president" and a call to confront Congress from the event's official handbook. Participation was denied to "subversive" groups and speeches were censored. John Lewis, then a leader of the militant Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and today a Georgia Congressman, was not allowed to deliver the part of his remarks criticizing the Democrats. Even the acclaimed writer James Baldwin was censored: Fearing he would extemporize, organizers would not let him read his own speech, which instead was delivered by the actor Burt Lancaster.

AP

Liberal civil rights, union and religious leaders, including Martin Luther King, meet with Democratic president John F. Kennedy following August 1963 March on Washington.

On November 10, some two months after the March on Washington, Malcolm X gave his famous "Message to the Grass Roots" speech in Detroit. He pointed out that it was only when militants in Birmingham, Alabama, started fighting back against racist violence and cop attacks that the government started to profess support for black people's rights. As Malcolm put it: "And right after that Kennedy got on the television and said 'this is a moral issue.' That's when he said he was going to put out a civil rights bill." With Martin Luther King pursuing his liberal-pacifist strategy while protesters were being brutally beaten, Malcolm deemed him and the other well-known leaders "fallen idols," a sentiment shared by many activists, both South and North.

Accounts of the mass struggle for black equality often omit the ferment that was shaking Northern cities, where for years there were protests against rat-infested housing, decrepit and segregated schools, unemployment and murderous cop terror. By the early 1960s, there were as many protests in the North and West as in the South. Over the summer of 1963, the Justice Department recorded 1,412 separate civil rights demonstrations across the country. In New York City in 1963 and '64, thousands of Harlem residents formed tenants councils, organizing to withhold rent to force services and repairs from the slumlords.

The images of Birmingham cops unleashing attack dogs on black protesters spurred explosions of anger by Northern blacks, not just over Jim Crow in the South but also over the raw racist reality that was their own American nightmare. When a black minister addressing a Harlem rally in support of the Birmingham demonstrators intoned, "I did not come here to inflame you," a voice in the crowd shouted out, "We want to be inflamed."

The largest of the early Northern protests was the 23 June 1963 "Walk to Freedom March" in Detroit—an event that is barely a footnote in official histories of the civil rights movement. Organized by Rev. Albert Cleage and Rev. C.L. Franklin of the Detroit Council for Human Rights, the march was meant, in Cleage's words, to "show people how we feel about Birmingham but also about conditions here in Detroit" (Peniel E. Joseph, *Waiting 'Til the Midnight Hour* [2006]). Up to 200,000 people marched along Woodward Avenue to Cobo Arena, where King gave an early rendition of his "I have a dream" speech.

The purpose of the march was the same as that of the March on Washington two months later, with King parading at the front along with Detroit's mayor and social-democratic auto union bureaucrat Walter Reuther. In the words of Malcolm X, they were the "clowns" leading this "circus." But unlike the celebrity-studded, tightly censored Washington affair, it was working-class, black Detroit that was in the streets that day, and many had little sympathy for King's "turn the other cheek" nostrums. Behind a group of children singing "We Shall Overcome" was a contingent of young men carrying a sign reading, "Negroes With Guns Shall Overcome."

In a letter to the mayor and police commissioner following the march, King praised the Detroit cops, stating, "You have proved to the Negro citizenry of your community that you are a friend rather than an enemy." For King's friends in uniform, it was soon time for business as usual. On July 5, they blew away black prostitute Cynthia Scott, shooting her twice in the back and again in the stomach as she lay bleeding on the ground. After the city prosecutor called the shooting justified, 3,000 demonstrators massed outside police headquarters shouting, "Get the killer cops!"

In his "Grass Roots" speech, Malcolm X scathingly recounted how the prominent black spokesmen co-opted sentiment for a militant march in Washington at the behest of the White House, which, he said, was "scared to death" that "this black steamroller was going to come down on the capital." Malcolm said:

> "They called in [Roy] Wilkins; they called in [A. Philip] Randolph; they called in these national Negro leaders that you respect and told them, 'Call it off.' Kennedy said, 'look, you all are letting this thing go too far.' And Old Tom said, 'Boss, I can't stop it, because I didn't start it.'... And that old shrewd fox, he said, 'If you all aren't in it, I'll put you in it. I'll put you at the head of it.'...
>
> "And as they took it over, it lost its militancy.... Why, it even ceased to be a march. It became a picnic, a circus. Nothing but a circus, with clowns and all.
>
> "They controlled it so tight, they told those Negroes what time to hit town, how to come, where to stop, what signs to carry, what song to sing, what speech they could make, and what speech they couldn't make; and then told them to get out of town by sundown. And every one of those Toms was out of town by sundown."

The liberal-led civil rights movement was able to uproot official Jim Crow segregation in the South, which had become economically outmoded and an embarrassment to the U.S. rulers internationally. But it could not tackle the pervasive oppression of the black masses that is rooted in the U.S. capitalist economy. In fact, the movement ran into a brick wall when it came North. The basic truth is that black emancipation requires sweeping capitalism away through socialist revolution.

For Marxists, Malcolm X was a contradictory figure whose political motion was uncompleted at the time of his assassination in 1965. His break from the religiosity of the Black Muslims was partial and his eclectic politics of Third Worldism and black nationalism were incapable of generating a program that could achieve black liberation. But he was hated and feared by the capitalist rulers for telling the truth about racist America. Malcolm X deeply understood that the U.S. government and its representatives, Democrats as well as Republicans, are deadly enemies of black freedom. For workers and youth today, this understanding would be a good beginning. While liberals and reformist "socialists" fawn over the 1963 March on Washington, we honor Malcolm X, who recognized bourgeois hypocrites and treacherous black "leaders" when he saw them. ■

Wardrop/Wayne State University

June 1963: Mass rally in downtown Detroit, part of wave of civil rights struggles that shook U.S., North and South.

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fighters continues today in the frame-up and life sentence of award-winning black journalist and MOVE supporter Mumia Abu-Jamal and the unspeakably cruel imprisonment of leftist attorney Lynne Stewart, who is dying of cancer. The prosecution of Bradley Manning and the drive to capture Edward Snowden and Julian Assange form part of this larger picture.

As opposed to Ellsberg, who argues that U.S. government overreach carries a whiff of Stalinist rule, we argue that the worst crimes of Stalinism were not hamfisted repression, of which we Trotskyists were the first and foremost victims, but its appeasement of capitalist rule worldwide by abandoning the proletarian, revolutionary and internationalist goals of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. This led, ultimately, to capitalist counterrevolution and economic immiseration in the former Soviet Union and across East Europe. We Trotskyists fought for the unconditional military defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution. Now, without Soviet power to check the hand of Washington, American imperialism is riding unbridled over most of the world. On the domestic front, a prostrate labor officialdom and low tide of class and social struggle help enable the government to get away with rampant surveillance and shredding of democratic rights.

The Spartacist League seeks to win opponents of this system to an understanding that it will take a series of socialist revolutions around the world to overturn the capitalist order and establish an internationally planned and collectivized economy based on human need, not private profit. Indeed, communism is America's and the world's last best hope. ■

Donate to Bradley Manning's Legal Defense!

The Partisan Defense Committee has donated to Bradley Manning's defense and encourages others to do the same. Send checks or money orders earmarked "Manning defense" and payable to: The Courage to Resist, 484 Lake Park Avenue #41, Oakland, CA 94610.

Racist Hell...

(continued from page 1)

state's "Stand Your Ground" law. Over 20 state governments, centered on the old Confederacy, have passed similar legislation with hipartisan support in recent years. We oppose such laws, which remove the guideline that a person in danger must seek to retreat before using deadly force. These laws thus sanction vigilantism. As we observed in "Trayvon Martin: Killed for Being Black in America" (*WV* No. 999, 30 March 2012), Florida's law "allows for the use of deadly force by anyone who claims a 'reasonable belief' that such force is necessary, without even attempting to disengage. And in racist America, a black kid in a hoodie is enough to claim 'reasonable belief' of danger."

For that matter, so is a group of black youths listening to rap music. In November 2012, four teenagers at a Florida gas station were in a parked SUV, next to the car of Michael Dunn, a white man. After complaining bitterly of the "thug music," Dunn opened fire on the SUV, killing 17-year-old Jordan Davis. Since his arrest, Dunn has invoked the "Stand Your Ground" defense on the basis that he believed the teens had a rifle (they did not) and were threatening to kill him.

Many liberals draw a straight line connecting opposition to "Stand Your Ground" with support for gun control. This amalgam is deadly dangerous for workers, black people and the poor. As Marxists, we support the right of armed self-defense and oppose gun control, the effect of which is to strengthen a monopoly of arms in the hands of the capitalist state—leaving guns in the hands of fascists, vigilantes and criminals as well as the cops. Working people must vigorously defend the right to bear arms, which is supposedly guaranteed by the Constitution. Both Trayvon Martin and Jordan Davis were minors, with no right to carry a firearm. If either had been armed, he might still be alive today. Of course, in racist America, survival might well have ended in a lengthy prison term, or even a death sentence. For simply firing a warning shot into the wall of her home during an argument with her husband, Marissa Alexander, a black mother of three, was recently sentenced to 20 years in a Florida prison after a judge denied her "Stand Your Ground" defense.

The crucial importance of armed self-defense for the fight for black rights was captured in a *New Yorker* (29 July) article by Jelani Cobb, despite its conflation of "Stand Your Ground" with the right to bear arms. Cobb noted:

> "There is a long history of African-American support for gun rights and the principle of armed self-defense. In 1957, after receiving threats of violence, Robert F. Williams armed the N.A.A.C.P. chapter that he led in Monroe, North Carolina.... The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee activist Fannie Lou Hamer spoke publicly of the loaded guns that she kept under her bed, and members of organizations like the Deacons for Defense and Justice carried weapons with the goal of protecting civil-rights workers in the South."

Self-defense against racist terror has historically been met with state repression, including through gun control measures. In the 1960s, such laws were passed in New York and California to specifically target Malcolm X and the Black Panthers. State bans were followed by gun control laws nationwide, especially after the ghetto upheavals that broke out following Martin Luther King's assassination in 1968.

Capitalist Profit Drive Killed Detroit

Key to bourgeois liberal mythology in America is the notion that racism boils down to bad laws and bad ideas, obscuring the truth that black oppression is *materially* based. As Karl Marx explained a century and a half ago in *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859), the "totality of relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which corresponds definite forms of social consciousness."

Reuters

The Commander honoring the troops: Barack Obama hosts White House ceremony for winners of National Association of Police Organizations' "TOP COPS" award, May 11.

The plight of Detroit throws into sharp relief the intertwining of black oppression and capitalist exploitation. When the city filed for bankruptcy on July 18, government spokesmen and the bourgeois press pointed the finger at mismanagement by city officials. This was a convenient alibi for the main perpetrators: the auto companies that first brought in waves of labor—white and black, native-born and immigrant—to slave away on the assembly line, and then mercilessly chucked them out when those plants did not produce sufficient profit. Motown was left to crumble away as the culmination of a decades-long process of deindustrialization—a series of decisions by the barons of capital to pursue profit-making elsewhere.

WV Photo

June 2001: Trade unionists march in Columbia, South Carolina, in defense of Charleston ILA members arrested for defending their picket line.

At its height, Detroit was the hub of the auto industry, and the United Auto Workers (UAW) union, forged through strike action in the 1930s, became the powerhouse of the labor movement in the U.S. But between 1947 and 1963 Detroit lost 140,000 manufacturing jobs. When profit margins increasingly narrowed in the 1970s as a result of Japanese competition, the Big Three began in earnest to carry out waves of plant closures across the Midwest, moving a good deal of production to low-wage areas in the open shop South and overseas.

Shortly after the wreckers' ball had demolished Chrysler's Dodge Main, and with it 30,000 jobs, the Spartacist League ran two candidates for city council in 1981 on a platform "For a Socialist Fight to Defend Labor/Black Detroit!" The campaign noted: "Here in Detroit we see the crisis of the entire capitalist system most starkly revealed, most advanced in decay, most anarchic in irrationality, most painful in social consequences. Detroit's skilled proletariat would be the most valuable resource of a rational society—the class that can build a socialist America" (*WV* No. 287, 14 August 1981). Today, with only two auto factories and 27,000 manufacturing jobs remaining inside city limits, skilled and unskilled workers are trying to survive on low-wage McJobs, unemployment lines and soup kitchens.

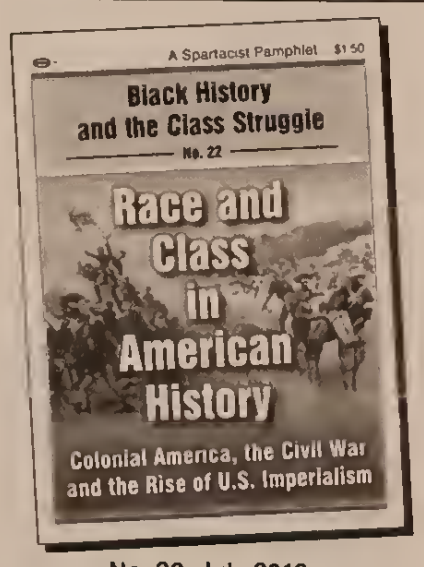
Since 1950, Detroit's population has gone from 1.8 million to 700,000 today, leaving an 82 percent black population that the capitalist rulers consider surplus. From the liberal Coleman Young in the 1970s to the not-so-liberal Dave Bing today, black Democratic mayors have presided over the attacks on the city's residents. Adding insult to injury, white Republican governor Rick Snyder appointed an emergency manager, black lawyer Kevyn Orr, to conduct a fire sale of city assets and slash costs to the bone, beginning with unionized labor. Orr's main qualification to run the city is his having been part of Chrysler's legal team during the auto bailout.

From the outset, the massive bailout of the automakers focused on how best to gut the UAW and bring wages and benefits down to the level in non-union plants. We opposed the bailout, warning that it "will be purchased through the further destruction of the jobs and livelihoods of working people" ("Bosses Declare War on UAW Workers," *WV* No. 926, 5 December 2008). Indeed, plant closures and mass layoffs followed, clearing the way for hiring new workers and temps at half the pay of senior workers when production picked up.

The UAW leadership enthusiastically agreed to these massive concessions, as well as a no-strike pledge good for six years. At the root of the labor traitors' capitulation is their support to the capitalist profit system—in particular the fortunes of the auto companies—and the "national interests" of U.S. imperialism. As UAW head Bob King told it during the 2012 elections, Obama had saved the auto industry with the bailout. With their program of class collaboration, the union tops have acceded to the proliferation of non-union plants, especially in the South—and now even Michigan has gone "right to work" like the Southern states. A first step in rebuilding the labor movement in this country will be to organize those plants, which means fighting head-on the color bar that has long served to divide workers and weaken their struggles against the bosses.

Such necessary struggles pose the need for a new leadership in the unions that is not beholden to the political parties of the class enemy. Such a leadership would use the weapons of the class struggle, not only to fight for jobs, better pay and conditions but also to wield labor's power in defense of the unemployed and the ghetto and barrio masses. This is a crucial part of the fight to forge a revolutionary workers party dedicated to the overthrow of the decaying capitalist order, which consigns the black masses to entrenched poverty, unemployment, rotten housing, segregated education and police terror.

A revolutionary leadership would seek to mobilize the working class, with its militant black component, to fight against every instance of racist injustice. This perspective flows from the understanding that black freedom will finally be achieved only when the capitalist exploiters are thrown from power and labor rules this society. This understanding was first imparted to the American Communist movement by the Bolshevik Party of V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky, which had succeeded in leading the working class in smashing capitalist rule in the October 1917 Russian Revolution. It is in this tradition that the Spartacist League seeks to build a workers party that emblazons on its banners the call: Black liberation through socialist revolution! ■



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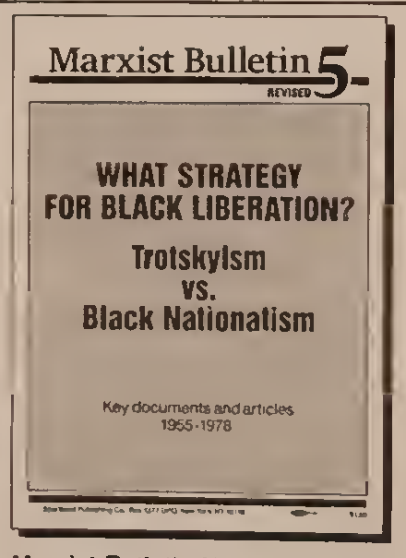

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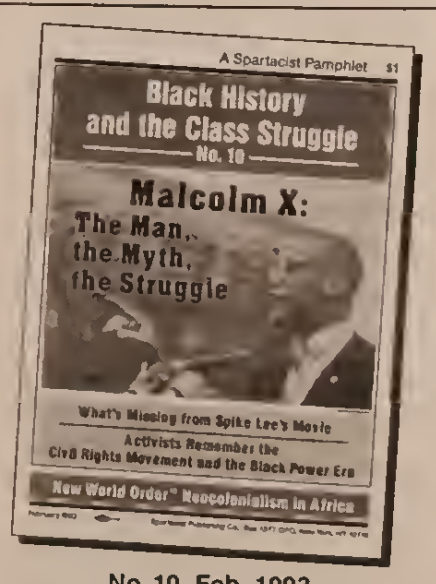

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Zimmerman Verdict—
21st Century Dred Scott Decision

Martin Family

WV Photo

July 15 protest in the Bronx against not-guilty verdict for killer of Trayvon Martin (inset).

There Is No Justice in the Capitalist Courts!

We reprint below a leaflet issued by the Spartacist League on July 17 and distributed at some of the protests that broke out around the country in the week after George Zimmerman walked. At all levels—municipal, state and federal—the courts are an integral part of the bourgeois state apparatus, dishing out plenty of justice for the capitalist ruling class at one end while workers, minorities and the poor get less than none at the other. The exploited and the oppressed will get due justice only once the capitalist state machinery is swept away through socialist revolution. The reprint incorporates a factual correction.

* * *

George Zimmerman got away with the coldblooded killing of Trayvon Martin. Not even a slap on the wrist, nothing. The verdict is the 21st-century echo of Chief Justice Taney's infamous declaration in the Supreme Court's 1857 Dred Scott decision that black people "had no rights which the white man was bound to respect." Dred Scott was a slave, Trayvon Martin a black teenager walking home from a 7-Eleven store with a bag of candy and an iced tea. But for wannabe cop and racist vigilante George Zimmerman, the 17-year-old Martin was on the "white" side of the tracks in Sanford, Florida, one of the "punks" who "always get away." So he stalked Trayvon like a fugitive slave and shot him dead. This is what they call post-racial America, where a black man sits in the Oval Office and black life on the streets is as cheap as ever.

The acquittal of Zimmerman—by a jury without a single black person on it—was no aberration in the American justice system. On the contrary, that system worked according to script. Here was a case study in the machinery of courts, cops and prosecutors whose job is to maintain and defend a system rooted in the brutal exploitation of the many by the few—a system built on a bedrock of racial oppression, from chattel slavery to wage slavery.

The only unusual thing was that Trayvon wasn't gunned down by a cop, the fate of so many young black men in this country. The Zimmerman verdict coincided with the release of the movie *Fruitvale Station*, based on the last day of Oscar Grant's life. A 22-year-old black man, Grant was shot in the back by a Bay Area Rapid Transit cop on New Year's Day, 2009, as he lay handcuffed and prone on the floor of the Oakland station. The movie stands out for depicting Oscar Grant as a human being with all the strengths and frailties of a young black man in capitalist America. This cuts against the grain of this society, where black youth are written off as violent predators, as suspects who are guilty until proven innocent.

It wasn't George Zimmerman on trial in that Florida courtroom, it was Trayvon Martin. His "crime" was being black in America. After killing Martin, Zimmerman was released without charges by the cops. Only six weeks later did a state prosecutor file an indictment. The same prosecutor had just won a case against a 31-year-old black mother, Marissa Alexander, who was given 20 years for firing a warning shot into a wall when threatened with violent attack by her husband. There was no such zeal when it came to prosecuting Zimmerman. It wasn't that the prosecution didn't have a case. The truth is that this wasn't their field of expertise, which is railroading black people to prison.

The judge ruled that race, the central issue in the case, could not be raised in court. But racist fear and loathing of black people was at the core of the defense case. By repeatedly pounding a dummy into the courtroom floor as "evidence" that it was the lanky teenager who assaulted the far heftier Zimmerman, they turned "the victim into the predator and the predator into the victim," in the words of black academic Robin Kelley. Contempt and derision for the testimony of Rachel Jeantel, the young black woman who was talking to Martin on his cell phone while he was stalked by the "creepy-ass cracker" Zimmerman, oozed from the courtroom to the media.

When the verdict was announced, black preachers and Democratic Party politicians scrambled to contain the outrage, appealing for peace. Replying to the call for calm, Gary Younge wrote in his London *Guardian* (14 July) column: "Those who now fear violent social disorder must ask themselves whose interests are served by a violent social order in which young black men can be thus slain and discarded." The role of the preachers and bourgeois politicians *is* to serve the interests of the rulers of this society by maintaining people's illusions in the "justice" system. This is what's behind Al Sharpton's call for protests at federal courthouses on July 20 to pressure the Justice Department to bring a civil rights case against Zimmerman.

Attorney General Eric Holder may be a black man, but he is the top cop in the vast state apparatus—the police, courts and prisons—whose purpose is to enforce the subjugation of the working class and the oppressed to the capitalist exploiters. As Richard Pryor so incisively put it, "You go down there looking for justice; that's what you find: just us"—that is, prisons overflowing with black people. As for the kind of investigations the Obama/Holder Justice Department are fervently pursuing, these are mainly aimed at silencing "whistle-blowers" like Bradley Manning and Edward Snowden for exposing U.S. imperialism's dirty wars, drone attacks and torture chambers targeting brown-skinned peoples around the globe as well as their domestic spying apparatus. The savagery perpetrated against Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib and detainees at Guantánamo is but a concentrated expression of the systematic brutality of the cops and prisons on U.S. soil.

Louis Schultze

Painting of Dred Scott.

Obama, the Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism who keeps a list of people for targeted assassinations abroad, used the Zimmerman verdict to piously ask "if we're doing all we can to stem the tide of gun violence." Actually, if Trayvon Martin had been armed he might be alive today, although he would also most likely be behind bars. Zimmerman invoked Florida's "Stand Your Ground" law, which, like similar laws in other states, allows for the use of deadly force by anyone claiming "reasonable belief" that such force is necessary. In this country, any black kid in a hoodie is enough for someone to claim "reasonable belief" of danger. By eliminating retreat as a criterion for self-defense, these laws are a license to kill. And as shown in the case of Marissa Alexander, black people are not allowed such ground to stand on.

At the same time, defending the right to bear arms is vital for the self-defense of working people, black people and the poor. Gun control is a means of enforcing a monopoly of violence for the capitalist state, leaving guns in the hands of cops, criminals and racist vigilantes while the rest of the population is defenseless. Gun control kills, and as the whole history of this country shows, it kills black people in particular.

It took a bloody Civil War, the Second American Revolution, with 200,000 black troops, guns in hand, to smash the chains of black chattel slavery. But the promise of black freedom was soon betrayed by the Northern bourgeoisie, which allied with the Southern propertied classes against the aspirations of the black freedmen. It will take a third American Revolution—a proletarian socialist revolution that breaks the chains of capitalist wage slavery—to finish the Civil War.

Many of those protesting Zimmerman's acquittal have spoken out against "the system." But this has little meaning absent the understanding that the working class is the only force with the social power and class interest to get rid of a system rooted in the exploitation of labor and the forcible subjugation of black people at the bottom. No doubt many view the notion of the workers fighting in their own interests and in the interests of black people and all the oppressed as wishful thinking. Responsibility for this can be laid at the doorstep of the trade-union misleaders, who for decades have allowed the unions to be hacked to pieces while turning a blind eye to the plight of the ghetto and barrio poor. The labor bureaucrats' accommodation to the rulers' onslaught flows from their allegiance to the capitalist profit system and to the "lesser evil" Democrats, whose job, no less than the Republicans, is to maintain that system.

But there are real battalions of organized labor, like the overwhelmingly black longshore unions in the Florida ports of Jacksonville, Miami and Tampa. Their labor is essential to the profitability of U.S. imperialism. In this lies their social power to take on the capitalist rulers. In turn, such workers provide a critical link to the defense of the black poor.

The key to unlocking this power is the fight for a class-struggle leadership of labor based on independence from and opposition to the capitalist state and its political parties. The Spartacist League/U.S. is dedicated to forging a multiracial revolutionary workers party that will lead the exploited in wresting the wealth of this country out of the hands of the greedy and corrupt capitalist owners. When the power of the ruling class and its state apparatus is shattered, this wealth will be deployed for the benefit of those who produced it—not least the descendants of the black slaves whose labor was a cornerstone on which American capitalism was built. In an egalitarian socialist America, Justice Taney's racist decree will be buried once and for all and the cause of black freedom will finally be realized.■

WORKERS VANGUARD

Convicted for Revealing Crimes of U.S. Imperialism

Bradley Manning, the courageous and self-sacrificing truth-teller who further revealed the exploitative everyday workings of U.S. imperialism as well as its heinous war crimes in Iraq and Afghanistan, was found guilty by a military judge on charges carrying a possible 136-year sentence. Imprisoned for more than three years before trial, including torture in solitary confinement, Manning persevered, aiming to change U.S. policy through exposure and public debate.

Manning's conviction in this court-martial was a foregone conclusion. Indeed, he pleaded guilty to lesser charges that could put him away for 20 years. That was not good enough for the vindictive U.S. government. Now in the sentencing phase, this show trial is a government experiment in political cryogenics to see how deeply it can freeze free speech and dissent by making an example of Manning. It is intended to set the stage for prosecution of WikiLeaks' Julian Assange, still sheltered in the Ecuadorian embassy in London, while U.S. lawmakers scream for his blood. Throwing the book at Bradley Manning also foreshadows what the U.S. would like to do to Edward Snowden, who was just granted temporary asylum in Russia. Fundamentally, the prosecution of Manning is intended to frighten everyone else into passive acceptance of U.S. outrages at home and abroad.

Manning was not convicted of aiding the enemy. This not-insignificant development was widely applauded by the capitalist press, which felt directly threatened by the prosecution's assertion that publication of documents constitutes direct or indirect aid to the enemy because someone, somewhere, sometime might use that information against the U.S. government. However, the judge left open the future use of this ominous catchall by denying a defense motion to throw out the charge. In the end, the court merely found that the prosecution had not proved its case on that count.

Manning's defense team eventually got the government to name two of the three enemies Manning allegedly aided (Al Qaeda and Al Qaeda of the Arabian Peninsula), but the third remained classified information. A July 27 posting on the ProPublica investigative journalism Web site reports that the Pentagon told them that "revealing who we're actually at war with would do serious damage to national security." ProPublica added: "The main reason? They think those groups would use the info as good publicity and allow them to recruit more."

Getty

July 30: Bradley Manning escorted by military police after his conviction, Fort Meade.

Free Bradley Manning!

Whether targeted by the CIA or the Pentagon, the people being shot at and bombed are aware that they are being shot and bombed. Some elements in the American ruling class are uncomfortable with the Pentagon's "logic." The Obama administration's fanatical prosecution of whistle-blowers alarms some. Even more are aghast at the revelations by Edward Snowden et al. of the boundless domestic spying on the population, which includes them too. This disquiet in ruling circles no doubt had an impact on the judge.

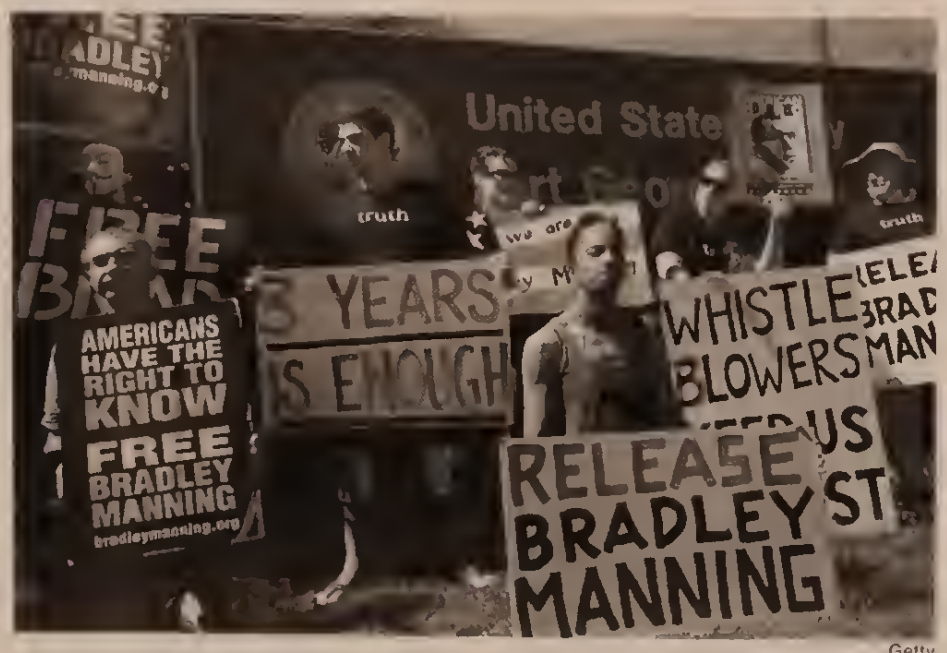
Among other charges, Manning was convicted of six counts under the 1917 Espionage Act. The prosecution reached into a Cold War-era tool kit to construct a red scare and portray Manning as an "anarchist." Civil libertarians complain that "whistle-blowing" is not spying, and they're right. But in fact, the draconian Espionage Act has historically been wielded to repress domestic political opposition to imperialist war.

John Reed, a journalist and founding member of the American Communist Party, was prosecuted under the Espionage Act for articles against World War I published in the radical journal, *The Masses*. Reed and others associated with the journal defeated the government in court, but the Feds then yanked the publication's mailing permit because it "skipped" an issue—the one seized by the government as allegedly seditious! Reed aptly summed up the workings of capitalist "justice": "In America law is merely the instrument for good or evil of the most powerful interest, and there are no Constitutional safeguards worth the powder to blow them to hell" ("One Solid Month of Liberty," *The Masses*, September 1917).

It is urgently necessary to continue to fight in defense of Bradley Manning. The organized labor movement, minorities, all opponents of the depredations of U.S. imperialism have an interest in this fight. As we wrote in "Truth-Teller on Trial: Free Bradley Manning," (*WV* No. 1026, 14 June): "Lifting the veil on the U.S. war machine was a gutsy act of conscience that objectively helps the victims and opponents of the imperialist system." Key information from the government's own sources that Manning provided to WikiLeaks included:

- Iraq war logs, including a civilian death count, showing that for every dead Iraqi officially classified as a combatant, two civilian men, women or children were killed
- U.S. military support to repression of political dissidents in Iraq and Afghanistan and tolerance of torture as policy toward political prisoners
- Guantánamo detainee files showing the innocence of prisoners and their torture by the U.S. military
- FBI training of torturers for the deposed Mubarak regime in Egypt
- State Department-led opposition to raising the minimum wage in Haiti, the poorest country in the Western hemisphere
- the Obama administration's drone bombing campaigns in Yemen
- Hillary Clinton's authorization of theft of the U.N. Secretary General's DNA [!]
- the notorious "collateral damage" video showing the military's blood lust in gunning down Reuters reporters and Iraqi civilians

In publicizing this material, and more, Bradley Manning and Julian Assange have helped open the eyes of the working class to the systematic workings of the state run by and for the capitalist class. But as Marxists, we understand that the whole system of capitalist exploitation cannot be changed by simply providing information. This system is based on the exploitation of labor for private profit, buttressed in the U.S. by systematic racial oppression. Imperialist war and subjugation of the Third World are inherent outgrowths of capitalism and will continue until politically conscious workers sweep away the whole system and replace it with an egalitarian socialist society.



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Manning supporters protest outside Fort Meade main gate on day of verdict.

Frame-Ups and Omissions by the Capitalist Press

The prosecution of Bradley Manning has provided a diagnostic X-ray of the capitalist media. The *New York Times*, which flatters itself with the motto "All the news that's fit to print," did not initially find the hugely valuable and unassailable evidence of U.S. war crimes that Manning offered them "fit to print." Neither did the *Washington Post*. So Manning submitted the Iraq and Afghanistan war logs and a trove of diplomatic cables to WikiLeaks. The *Times* did not find the lengthy pre-trial detention and torture of Bradley Manning fit to print either: indeed, the paper barely covered the case until its own public editor lodged a protest. Then the *coup de grace*: upon his conviction, the *Times* ran a creepy, character-assassinating portrait of Manning as a psychologically unstable social misfit on the front page.

There is a purpose driven by big economic interests that dictates the behavior of the so-called "free press." As Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin wrote, "Under capitalism, a newspaper is a capitalist enterprise, a means of enrichment, a medium of information and entertainment for the rich, and an instrument for duping and cheating the mass of working people"

continued on page 12

WORKERS VANGUARD

50¢

No. 1029

6 September 2013

Obama Presses for Missile Strikes

No to Imperialist Attack Against Syria!

U.S. Navy

White House

Guided-missile destroyer USS *Gravely*, part of fleet deployed to Mediterranean in preparation for U.S. attack against Syria. National Security Staff discusses Syria at White House, August 30.

SEPTEMBER 2—After having signaled that a military assault on Syria was imminent, Barack Obama backtracked two days ago and asked Congress to grant him authorization after it gets back in session on September 9. But the Commander-in-Chief is no less determined to order missile attacks. Obama claims that bombing Syria would be retribution for a poison gas attack on August 21 allegedly carried out by the Syrian bourgeois regime of Bashar al-Assad against his own people. In fact, the projected missile strikes are an ominous assertion of the imperialists' power to brutalize any country whose leaders do not toe the line laid down by Washington. Factoring heavily in the calculations of the White House is Assad's ally Iran, with Secretary of State John Kerry arguing that Tehran would "feel emboldened, in the absence of action [against Syria], to obtain nuclear weapons."

Obama announced the pause in his march to attack after encountering unexpectedly strong opposition in foreign capitals. In Britain, the Conservative Party's David Cameron became the first prime minister in memory to have lost a vote on military action—by some accounts since 1782, when parliament voted to stop fighting against the American colonies' War of Independence. The opposition Labour Party, which under Prime Minister Tony Blair led Britain into wars against Serbia, Afghanistan and Iraq, put forward an amendment supporting an attack against Syria under certain conditions (like at least waiting for the UN inspectors' report). The Labour Party amendment failed by an even greater margin than the government motion.

Among the major European powers, that left only France, the former colonial overseer of Syria, as a likely participant in the U.S.-led assault. Backing the Syrian regime is capitalist Russia, which has provided Assad with sophisticated missile defense technology and vowed to veto any military action proposed under the aegis of the United Nations. In a boost to the U.S., yesterday Saudi Arabia, one of the major backers of the jihadist component of the Syrian opposition, and the United Arab Emirates announced their support for the plan to attack Syria.

Before Obama launched U.S. warplanes to bomb Muammar el-Qaddafi's Libya in 2011, he ostentatiously affirmed the power of the imperial presidency by refusing to seek a vote of approval by Congress. Now, with precious few coalition partners internationally and little popular support in the U.S. for military intervention in Syria, Obama has turned to Congress to share responsibility and provide him some political cover, although the administration has made it clear that it will not be bound by the vote.

The bulk of working people in the U.S., war-weary and squeezed by the years-long economic downturn, do not back an attack on Syria. A sizable section of the capitalist ruling class has its own qualms about getting bogged down in another Near East quagmire. After devastating Iraq, once a cultural center of the region, and butchering its peoples, the U.S. bourgeoisie ended up with a black eye diplomatically and a Shi'ite government in Baghdad that is a close ally of Iran.

The shadow of the war in Iraq, sold on phony reports of Saddam Hussein's "weapons of mass destruction," has stoked widespread skepticism about the intelligence claims that the gas attack in the suburbs of Damascus was carried out by the Assad regime. Even U.S. intelligence officials acknowledge that their case is no "slam dunk." Certainly, the imperialists are masters at fabricating provocations when they find it expedient. Recall the 1964 "Gulf of Tonkin incident," a phony attack on a U.S. warship by North Vietnamese forces cooked up by the Lyndon Johnson administration to provide the pretext for a massive escalation of American forces in Vietnam.

In any case, what motivates the U.S. rulers is not protecting civilians from massacres. They hardly batted an eye last month when the military regime in Egypt that took power in a July coup slaughtered hundreds of protesters. On the home front, the American bourgeoisie has no shortage of blood on its hands, from the gunning down of striking rail workers in 1877 to the 1985 bombing of the largely black MOVE commune.

We do not know who is responsible for the August 21 gas attack. But as Marxists, our stance is not guided by which of the two reactionary forces in the devastating Syrian civil war was behind it. What must be understood is that it is U.S. imperialism that is the greatest danger to the working people and downtrodden of the planet. It is the duty of the proletariat, especially U.S. workers in the belly of the imperialist beast, to stand for the defense of Syria against the impending military attack by the rapacious imperialists. Our call for defense of Syria, a semicolonial country, in the military sense does not imply the least political support to that country's reactionary Alawite-dominated regime. This is in sharp contrast to reformist organizations, such as the Greek Communist Party (KKE), that combine opposition to U.S. military intervention with political support to Assad. Nor do we support the rebels—who are largely Sunni-fundamentalist—as does much of the left in the imperialist centers.

An imperialist missile attack against Syrian military sites would necessarily strengthen the insurgents and further inflame communal tensions. The Syrian civil war is increasingly escalating into a Near East-wide Sunni versus Shi'ite communal war extending from Syria to Lebanon and Iraq. In Iraq, Sunni forces linked to Al Qaeda have stepped up bombings in Shi'ite neighborhoods, threatening a return to the orgy of sectarian bloodshed that engulfed the country in 2006-07. Lebanon is also suffering its worst sectarian violence in years, including car bombings in Beirut suburbs controlled by the Shi'ite Hezbollah, which has troops in Syria fighting on behalf of Assad. Meanwhile, since mid July rebel forces have been carrying out "ethnic cleansing" of Kurds in northeast Syria.

The spreading communal violence is being seized upon as a pretext for further U.S. military buildup in this oil-rich region. In June, General Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, revealed that top U.S. commanders were seeking permission from Iraq and Lebanon to deploy troops in those countries. This would be in addition to the U.S. Patriot missile batteries and fighter planes stationed in Jordan and Turkey, the two British military bases in Cyprus and the massive U.S.

continued on page 10

Egypt: For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

Part 3: The Rise of Religious Reaction....8

Partisan Defense Committee

The PDC is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League.

Sentenced to 35 Years

Free Chelsea Manning!

Chelsea (formerly Bradley) Manning was sentenced by a military judge at the end of her court martial on August 21 to 35 years in prison with a dishonorable discharge for giving more than 700,000 classified military documents, diplomatic cables and war footage to WikiLeaks. After over three years of pretrial detention, which included torture in solitary confinement, she has been demoted and is now incarcerated in the military's maximum-security prison at Leavenworth undergoing "the indoctrination process," according to Manning's lawyer, David Coombs, during which all contact with the outside world is cut off. The persecution of Manning is a cornerstone of the Obama administration's campaign against whistle-blowers and significantly its first conviction under the 1917 Espionage Act. It serves as a warning of what the government has in store for WikiLeaks' Julian Assange and Edward Snowden for publicizing details of U.S. war atrocities and massive routine domestic spying.

In a statement to Obama requesting a presidential pardon, Manning referenced the crimes of U.S. imperialism in Iraq, Afghanistan and Guantánamo, and continued: "Our nation has had similar dark moments for the virtues of democracy—the Trail of Tears, the Dred Scott decision, McCarthyism, the Japanese-American internment camps—to name a few. I am confident that many of our actions since 9/11 will one day be viewed in a similar light." Manning released the classified documents in order to expose inhumanity and torture. In so doing, Manning performed a service to the working class internationally in helping lift the veil on U.S. imperialist barbarity.

The next day, Manning issued another brave statement: "I want everyone to know the real me. I am Chelsea Manning. I am a female. Given the way that I feel, and have felt since childhood, I want to begin hormone therapy as soon as possible. I hope that you will support me in this transition." Despite court rulings that have upheld transgender prisoners' constitutional rights to receive hormone therapy, the Army immediately announced that none would be forthcoming for Manning in the all-male Leavenworth penitentiary. Coombs said that he will "do everything in my power" to make sure the Army provides quality care and medication, a fight that the Spartacist League and the Partisan Defense Committee fully support.

Initially, most of the U.S. media refused to accept Manning's clear request that she be referred to by her name Chelsea and the female pronoun. Since then, the *New York Times*, NPR and others have changed their policy to conform to Manning's wishes. The abiding prudery of some bourgeois news outlets is but the "polite" end of the spectrum of hatred faced by transgender people in this bigoted, brutal capitalist society, where transgenders are frequently targets of violent, sometimes murderous, attack.

To help alleviate the isolation of imprisonment, write to Chelsea Manning. For now, the envelope should be addressed to PVT Bradley Manning, 89289, 1300 N. Warehouse Road, Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2304. The Partisan Defense Committee has donated to Chelsea Manning's defense and encourages others to do the same. Send checks or money orders earmarked "Manning defense" and payable to: The Courage to Resist, 484 Lake Park Avenue #41, Oakland, CA 94610. ■

Medical Release Denied

Free Lynne Stewart!

Lynne Stewart, 73 years old and terminally ill with Stage IV breast cancer, was again denied medical release from prison on August 9. Judge John G. Koeltl turned down her latest request on the grounds that the Federal Bureau of Prisons must first make a motion in favor of such a release. This ruling throws the case back to the very prison authorities carrying out the vendetta against this outspoken leftist lawyer with a history of defending radicals, black militants and the poor. Federal prison director, Charles E. Samuels Jr., refused to release Stewart last June, falsely and vindictively citing an improvement in her health! Stewart, whose cancer has metastasized to her lungs, bones, lymph nodes and shoulder, is facing death within the prison walls if she is not released soon.

In a 2005 "war on terror" show trial, Stewart was framed up and convicted for giving material support to terrorism when representing Egyptian Islamic fundamentalist cleric Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman. The alleged "material support" was to communicate her client's views to Reuters news service. This verdict gave the government a green light to prosecute lawyers for the alleged crimes of their clients and trampled on the basic right to counsel and free speech.

Her Arabic translator Mohamed Yousry and paralegal Ahmed Abdel Sattar were also convicted. In 2010, at the instigation of the Obama administration, a federal appeals court instructed Judge Koeltl to re-examine Stewart's sentence. Appeasing his superiors, he upped the original 28-month sentence to ten years, making it in effect a death sentence for Stewart, who was undergoing chemotherapy for breast cancer. Despite her situation, Stewart remains unbroken and unapologetic and continues to fight for her release.

On August 12, Attorney General Eric Holder announced a new policy for "compassionate release" due to the financial strain of caring for the growing number of elderly, infirm prisoners in the federal system. But the bourgeoisie has a particular hatred for political prisoners who have taken up the cause of the oppressed, and there is no reason to assume Stewart will be included among those who might be deemed to "pose no danger" to society. We continue to fight for Lynne Stewart's freedom and urge our readers to write her, donate to the defense fund and sign the petition that can be found at lynnestewart.org. Contributions to her legal defense can be sent to: Lynne Stewart Organization, 1070 Dean St., Brooklyn, NY 11216. Letters can be sent to: Lynne Stewart #53504-054, Federal Medical Center, Carswell, PO Box 27137, Fort Worth, TX 76127. ***Free Lynne Stewart now!*** ■

TROTSKY

Imperialism and War

The looming U.S. attack on neocolonial Syria is but the latest example of the predatory wars through which the imperialist powers maintain their system of brutal exploitation and oppression the world over. The drive for war under imperialism was eloquently explained in 1936 by then-Trotskyist James Burnham (under the pseudonym John West).

LENIN

The truth of the matter is this: In the stage of imperialism, capitalist society is continuously at war. This is of the essence of imperialism. It is not a question of one war starting, then stopping, to be followed in a decade or two by a new war. It is war all the time, changing only in the form it takes, in the degree of violence.

Conflict at the "economic level" continues without interruption: economic struggles for sources of raw material, for new markets, for new fields of exploitation; tariff and exchange battles; competition for shipping and loans; exploration to discover new mines, oil wells, land for rubber and coffee and cotton plantations; and all the rest.

But the conflict can never remain at the purely economic level. The stakes are too high—failure at the economic level means the destruction of the defeated economic group. Therefore, the finance-capitalists must utilize constantly their political servants—the governments of their respective countries. And the governments are not slow to answer. They build up their military and naval armaments to almost unbelievable heights. They are ever ready to unseat a Central American government, threaten a native prince, wipe out "red bandits," stop or start a revolution, send a flotilla of warships or a regiment of marines, resent an "insult to the flag," if necessary set two countries—Bolivia and Paraguay, for example—flying at each other's throats to settle the dispute of Standard Oil and Shell over rights to an oil field. At the beck and call of finance-capital, the government, with the guns and cruisers and airplanes, snaps quickly to attention. That, indeed, is what the governments are for....

The moral, religious, racial and ideological disguises that war wears must not be allowed to hide the fundamental conflicts which are the true source of modern war. The general conclusion is inescapable: Modern war is neither accidental nor due to the evil of human nature nor decreed by God. War is of the very essence of imperialist-capitalism, as much a part of capitalism as wage labor. To speak of capitalism without war is like speaking of a human being without lungs. The fate of one is inextricably bound to the fate of the other.

—"John West" (James Burnham), *War and the Workers* (1936)

CORRECTION

WV No. 1028 (9 August) reprinted a Spartacist League leaflet on the George Zimmerman verdict, "There Is No Justice in the Capitalist Courts!" noting that we had made a factual correction without stating what it was. The correction was to the leaflet's description of Dred Scott as a fugitive slave. Though enslaved at the time of the notorious 1857 Supreme Court decision, Dred Scott was never a fugitive. The leaflet also stated that the jury in the Zimmerman trial had not a single black person on it, as was widely reported at the time. Subsequently, one of the jurors identified herself to the press as a black Hispanic.

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Stop and Frisk, War on Drugs

Liberal Illusions and Racist Law and Order

On August 12, U.S. District Court judge Shira Scheindlin in Manhattan ruled that the NYPD's practice of routinely stopping and frisking blacks and Latinos was unconstitutional. Since 2004, the cops have made over 4.5 million such stops, under what Scheindlin called a "policy of indirect racial profiling." The same day, U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder, motivated by the need to reduce the enormous financial costs of mass incarceration, announced proposals to bypass the draconian mandatory minimum sentences for federal drug charges. These two pronouncements were hailed in the bourgeois press as signaling a sea change in longstanding "tough on crime" policies—code for targeting black people who suffer daily brutalization and humiliation by the racist cops and courts. What is in the offing is nothing of the sort.

Scheindlin ordered a federal monitor to oversee police reforms, such as putting body cameras on some cops. In an August 12 editorial, the *New York Times* gushed that Scheindlin "upheld the bedrock principle of individual liberty." Similarly effusive was the reformist Workers World Party in its article "NYC 'Stop and Frisk' Gets Court Slapdown" (13 August). Endorsing the view that the ruling "was just the beginning of a long struggle for real change," Workers World conveyed its own fatuous optimism through the words of the executive director of the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR), which brought the lawsuit. The CCR head declared: "This administration has created bike lanes throughout the city and is waging a major campaign to ban big sodas. If they can put that effort into bike lanes and big sodas, then they can make necessary changes to stop the unconstitutional harassment of millions of New Yorkers."

More grounded in reality was a *New York Times* (14 August) op-ed piece titled "Racial Profiling Lives On" by Devin Carbado, Cheryl Harris and Kimberle Williams Crenshaw. The authors pointed out that Scheindlin's decision "does nothing to disrupt the authority the Supreme Court has given police officers to target African-Americans and Latinos with little or no basis." This authority gives the cops "frighteningly wide discretion to follow, stop, question, frisk and employ excessive force against African-Americans and Latinos who have shown virtually no indication of wrongdoing."

In our article "Stop-and-Frisk Trial and Bogus Police 'Reform'" (*WV* No. 1022, 19 April), we noted that if the judge "rules for the cops, they will no doubt feel more emboldened as they mete out their daily dose of racist brutality. If she rules against the NYPD, stripping this practice of its legal license, the cops will no doubt move to repackage their systematic abuse." Indeed, Scheindlin explicitly stated she was "not ordering an end to the practice of stop-and-frisk." Even so, the city is appealing the ruling, with Mayor Michael Bloomberg haughtily declaring: "You're not going to see any change in tactics overnight."

The billionaire Bloomberg had good reason to make this promise. As has been the case with countless police "reforms" across the country—from civilian review boards to federal oversight—Scheindlin's ruling, along with similar measures adopted by the New York City Council, will serve only to refurbish the cops' image, making the thugs in blue more effective in carrying out their dirty work. The cold, hard fact is that the cops—white, black or Latino—harass, terrorize and brutalize the ghettos and barrios because as the enforcers of racist "law and order" that is their job. So, for example, NYC police commissioner Ray Kelly—who rolled out stop-and-frisk to "instill fear" in black and Latino youth—was praised as an "outstanding" candidate to head the Department of Homeland Security by President Obama.

WV Photo

Spartacist banner cut against Democratic Party cheerleading at Al Sharpton's August 24 commemoration of 1963 March on Washington, D.C.

Rivaling the rose-colored view of a kinder, gentler NYPD was the illusion that Holder's announcement would make more than an insignificant dent in the mass imprisonment of blacks and Latinos. In that August 12 speech, the first black attorney general talked up how "too many Americans go to too many prisons for far too long" while also praising the Obama administration's efforts to build up the police forces that send them there. Holder was subsequently given a place of honor at the March on Washington commemoration, which attracted tens of thousands of black people who are fed up with the injustice that defines their daily lives, most recently highlighted in the acquittal of the racist vigilante who blew away Trayvon Martin. From the speakers' platform, Holder—the top cop overseeing the entire apparatus of racist capitalist injustice—addressed the families and friends of his many victims.

It is conceivable that Holder's plan might mitigate the numbers sent to do hard time for drug "crimes," although its beneficiaries will overwhelmingly *not* be black people. All Holder did was direct federal prosecutors to omit the weight of drugs involved when drafting an indictment. This information will still be considered by U.S. attorneys when deciding *who* to prosecute and could be placed in evidence at trial. It also will be available to judges during sentencing.

Holder's proposal is also cheap given that most prosecutions take place in state courts, over whose prosecutors Holder & Co. have no authority. In federal prosecutions, it would apply only to "certain" drug offenders who have no ties to large-scale organizations, gangs or cartels and no significant criminal history. For instance, the case cannot "involve violence," the use of a weapon or sales to minors.

Branding blacks and Latinos for having "gang" connections is second nature to prosecutors, at both the federal and state levels. Thanks to the "war on drugs," many minority youth are already saddled with a criminal history. Furthermore, the judges—like the one in Florida who did everything possible to make sure Trayvon Martin's killer walked free—will no doubt find fewer occasions for leniency for blacks and Latinos than for white people facing similar charges. If anything, Holder's directive will widen the racial disparity in incarceration.

While we favor any measures mitigating the drug laws, no amount of tinkering will change their reactionary nature or racist enforcement. We call for the decriminalization of drugs, just as we call for abolishing all other laws against victimless "crimes." This or that measure may help decelerate but won't stop the disproportionate imprisonment of blacks. With black oppression ingrained in American capitalism, racist cop terror and the vast numbers warehoused in prison will continue to be the grim reality until the multiracial working class takes power and sweeps the entire apparatus of capitalist state repression into the dustbin of history.■

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*Note to readers: We no longer have an "at large" quota, which was largely redundant as it mostly consisted of *WV* subscriptions sold by comrades in the ICL's Canadian section and counted in their annual *WV/Spartacist Canada* sub drive quotas as well.

Dr. Henry Morgentaler, 1923-2013

Heroic Fighter for Abortion Rights

The following article originally appeared in Spartacist Canada *No. 178 (Fall 2013), newspaper of our comrades of the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste.*

Dr. Henry Morgentaler died in Toronto on May 29 at the age of 90. For more than 40 years, he was at the centre of the struggle for abortion rights in Canada. A tenacious fighter and a humane and compassionate man, he repeatedly risked his freedom, security and even his life in this

SPARTACIST CANADA

struggle. In the early 1970s he was subjected to six years of trials despite three jury acquittals, and spent ten months in prison, suffering a heart attack after being thrown into solitary confinement. In 1983, police raided his clinics and he was again dragged through the courts for defying Canada's reactionary abortion laws. Again, no jury would convict him.

Morgentaler's greatest legal victory was in the Supreme Court of Canada in 1988. As a result, Canada today has no laws restricting abortion rights. Yet a patchwork of obstacles and regulations, including too few doctors and inadequate medical facilities, mean that many women lack access to this medical procedure. Morgentaler himself fought for 20 years against obstructionist provincial governments that refused to fund abortions or tried to bar him from setting up clinics. In New Brunswick, a woman needs the consent of two doctors for a publicly funded abortion. In Prince Edward Island, one cannot get an abortion at all. In Yukon and Nunavut, abortions are not performed after 12 weeks, hitting Native women harshly.

Morgentaler performed tens of thousands of abortions, and many of his patients sought to express their gratitude, for he had quite literally saved their lives. But his defiance of Canada's abortion laws also tapped into a seemingly bottomless well of anti-woman bigotry, often laced with anti-Semitism. Abortion is socially explosive because, in giving women control over their fertility, it undermines the institution of the family, a key instrument for the oppression of women. Thus the right to free abortion on demand is inseparable from the broader struggle for the emancipation of women.

From the Lodz Ghetto to the Auschwitz Death Camp

Henry Morgentaler's story began in Lodz, Poland where he was born in 1923, the son of ardent Jewish socialists. Poland was (and remains) overwhelmingly Catholic. Its deeply rooted anti-Semitism exploded in the mid 1930s as Jewish businesses were boycotted and Jews were barred from jobs in the civil service, in public schools and many other places. A wave of pogromist violence between 1935 and 1939 was instigated by reactionary political parties, the clergy, landowners, the intelligentsia and the bourgeoisie, leaving many hundreds dead and well over 1,000 injured. As Morgentaler told his biographer Eleanor Wright Pelrine:

> "Jews were the Christ killers, and Poles were vicious and virulent in their anti-Semitism, largely on a religious basis. There were other factors, of course. Jews were used as scapegoats; they were resented for their presumed economic power and almost everything else. An anti-Semite could use any argument he liked. There was a large Jewish proletariat, a lot of poor Jews in Poland, and on the one hand the anti-Semites damned Jews as the big capitalists, and on the other as revolutionaries trying to overthrow the system."
>
> —*Morgentaler: The Doctor Who Couldn't Turn Away* (1975)

Henry's father Josef was a well-known and respected trade unionist and member of the Jewish Socialist Labour Bund. An early target for the Nazi stormtroopers, Josef Morgentaler was arrested and tortured just weeks after the 1 September 1939 German invasion of Poland. He died in a concentration camp at the hands of the Nazis. Jews in the Lodz ghetto, which included Henry, his brother Mumek (Mike) and mother Golda, endured starvation and forced labour. When the Nazis liquidated the ghetto in 1944, the Morgentalers were shipped to Auschwitz along with many others. Near the end of the war, the brothers were sent to Dachau. Against all odds, they survived.

Montreal Gazette

Toronto, November 1984: Jubilant doctors Robert Scott (left) and Henry Morgentaler (center) with defense lawyer Morris Manning after jury acquittal.

Postwar Canada and Social Struggles in Quebec

After the war, Henry made his way to Belgium where he studied medicine. However, he could not practice there, and he and his wife Eva, also a survivor of the death camps, managed to get to Canada in early 1950. Anti-Semitism was endemic in the Canadian ruling class. Liberal prime minister Mackenzie King had effusively praised Adolf Hitler in 1937 and his government slammed the doors to desperate Jews fleeing the Nazi Holocaust. Between 1933 and 1945, Canada took in fewer Jewish refugees than any other imperialist power: not even 5,000.

This was one of many crimes committed by the imperialists during World War II, which was no "war for democracy" but, at bottom, an interimperialist conflict for global political and economic domination. While sharply opposing all the imperialist combatants, Trotskyists stood for the unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union which, despite its Stalinist degeneration, remained a workers state where capitalist and landlord exploitation had been overthrown in the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. After the war, like their American and British senior partners, the Canadian rulers welcomed with open arms thousands of Nazi war criminals as "freedom fighters" in the imperialists' crusade to destroy the Soviet Union.

After settling in Montreal, Morgentaler was denied entry to the English-language McGill University which, like many Canadian universities, had quotas limiting the admittance of Jews. Instead, he completed his medical studies at the francophone Université de Montréal and in 1955 established a practice in the city's working-class, French-speaking east end.

Quebec at that time was still very much in the grip of the Catholic church; the oppression of women was profound. Divorce was prohibited, and until 1964 married women were legally deemed to lack the "capacity" even to sign contracts. The society was shaped by the national oppression of the French-speaking Québécois nation by the British-derived bourgeoisie, which worked in league with the Catholic hierarchy.

The 1960s and early '70s saw tumultuous social upheaval in Quebec, including in the francophone working class, whose struggles were fuelled in large part by opposition to national oppression. The dominance of the Catholic church was broken. Among other things, birth rates plummeted from one of the highest in the world to one of the lowest. It was amid this turmoil that Henry Morgentaler entered the political arena as a secular humanist fighting against the confessional school system. Alongside the Mouvement Laïque de Langue Française, he launched the Committee for Neutral Schools.

U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum

Entrance to Lodz ghetto, in Nazi-occupied Poland, where the young Morgentaler lived before being sent to death camps.

At this time, abortion and all forms of contraception were illegal and Canada's laws were among the strictest in the world. Maria Corsillo, who helped found and today manages the Scott abortion clinic in Toronto, recalls the period vividly:

> "I was a seven-year-old immigrant and I used to go with women to the doctor and translate for them. 'Tell him I can't have another,' they'd say to me, and the doctor would always respond, 'There's nothing I can do'."
>
> —*Now* [Toronto], 6-13 June

By now a prominent and outspoken crusader for abortion rights, in 1967 Morgentaler addressed a parliamentary hearing calling for the legalization of abortion. He was soon besieged by desperate women pleading for abortions and in January 1968 he consciously defied the law and performed his first abortion. In 1969, the federal Liberal government of Pierre Trudeau decriminalized contraception and somewhat eased the laws against abortion while keeping it in the Criminal Code. Now, to obtain an abortion, women had to win the approval of a panel of three doctors, the degrading "therapeutic abortion committee."

That same year, Morgentaler closed his family practice to devote himself to providing abortions. "I decided to break the law to provide a necessary medical service because women were dying at the hands of butchers and incompetent quacks, and there was no one there to help them," he told another biographer, Catherine Dunphy. "The law was barbarous, cruel and unjust. I had been in a concentration camp, and I knew what suffering was. If I can ease suffering, I feel perfectly justified in doing so" (cited in *New York Times*, 29 May). He quickly became renowned for his empathy and skill. He pioneered new and safer abortion techniques, and over the years trained hundreds of doctors to perform the procedure.

Dr. Morgentaler was first charged under the new abortion law in 1970, and thus began the succession of trials and acquittals that dominated his life and the fight for abortion rights for the next two decades. He was acquitted three times by largely working-class francophone Québécois juries. In a legally unprecedented move, the Quebec Court of Appeal overturned his 1974 acquittal and sentenced him to 18 months in jail. He served ten months and was finally freed in early 1976.

Cold War II and the War on Women

In the early 1980s, access to abortion throughout Canada became even worse. In Toronto the need was desperate. In 1981, Women's College Hospital performed just three abortions per week, while Toronto General, which received some 75 requests *per day*, did six per week, but only on Thursdays. Fewer and fewer hospitals even had the wretched therapeutic abortion committees. Morgentaler returned to the battle, and in 1983 opened clinics in Winnipeg and Toronto.

The backlash was swift and violent. In both cities, police staged jackboot raids on his clinics. The then-ruling Manitoba New Democratic Party was in the forefront of this persecution. The NDP's attorney general, Roland Penner, vowed to prosecute any violations of the reactionary abortion laws, and he did. Morgentaler later spoke of his naiveté in believing that "since the NDP has a platform supporting freedom of choice, they would refrain from prosecution." A few months later, when we

interviewed Dr. Morgentaler for *Women and Revolution*, he told us:

> "And the Winnipeg police raided the clinic twice, twice when operations were being done. They really were quasi-fascist acts. Somewhat like a police state—you know? It's never happened before anywhere and I think that the prosecution in Winnipeg is probably one of the most vicious that I've ever seen."
>
> —"'Pro-Life' Gestapo Raids Abortion Clinics," *W&R* No. 27 (Winter 1983-84)

State repression fuelled anti-woman violence and vile anti-Semitism. In 1983, a man armed with garden shears attacked Morgentaler outside his Toronto clinic. Soon after, arsonists tried to destroy the clinic and it was continually besieged by mobs backed by the Catholic church. These "pro-life" fanatics were the shock troops in the bourgeoisie's war on women, part and parcel of the then escalating war on "godless communism," which sought to roll back every working-class gain from the Russian Revolution to trade unions. This was the reactionary climate of the renewed Cold War offensive against the Soviet Union, which despite its Stalinist degeneration stood as a roadblock to the imperialists' drive to reconquer the entire globe for capitalist exploitation.

Throughout the 1980s, the Trotskyist League stood out for our defense of the Soviet Union and the bureaucratically deformed workers states of East Europe. For this, we were frequently attacked and excluded from protests, including International Women's Day demonstrations, by reformist leftists, feminists and their often male enforcers. The "pro-choice" reformists and feminists lined up behind the imperialist drive against the USSR, thereby trampling on women's rights. In 1978-79, when a modernizing, Soviet-allied government in Afghanistan moved to implement modest reforms for women such as lowering the bride price and instituting education, tribalist Islamic reactionaries backed by the CIA erupted in violence and terror. When the Soviet Union sent its Red Army into Afghanistan in late 1979 at the invitation of the left-nationalist government, the reformist left internationally echoed the imperialist hue and cry against this.

Szlukovenyi/Globe and Mail

Toronto, June 1983: Demonstration in support of newly opened Morgentaler clinic.

Poland was a particular flashpoint. When the oppositional Solidarność movement emerged in 1980, the feminists, along with much of the left, the NDP and the labour bureaucracy, hailed this clerical-nationalist outfit, which was also promoted by the Pope and the CIA. After it consolidated around an openly reactionary program for capitalist counterrevolution a year later, we raised the call to "Stop Solidarność counterrevolution!" even as we denounced the many crimes of the ruling Stalinist bureaucracy. After Solidarność came to power in 1989, capitalism was restored. In 1993 it made virtually all abortions illegal.

The feminists who organized the abortion rights campaigns of the 1970s and '80s generally supported the social-democratic NDP. Many were also supporters of ostensibly socialist groups which, in true reformist fashion, tailored their demands to be acceptable to bourgeois liberals. As feminists, they drew the sex line rather than the class line, framing their campaigns around single-issue calls such as "repeal the abortion laws," later reduced to "choice." But neither of these slogans begins to address the needs of poor, immigrant and Native women who need free and unrestricted access to abortion. The wealthy will always be able to get medical care, including abortions. Indeed, more than once during his legal trials, Morgentaler noted that his patients included the wives, sisters and daughters of the same politicians and judges that were leading the prosecution against him.

The local Toronto abortion rights coalition made its stance all too clear in 1977, when it voted down the demand for "Free abortion on demand" put forward by a representative of the Immigrant Women's Centre. The latter withdrew from the coalition, which was so obviously stacked against poor and minority women. The Trotskyist League has always fought for free abortion on demand, for free, quality health care for all and free 24-hour childcare, part of our broader struggle for women's liberation through socialist revolution.

Murderous War on Abortion Rights

In 1984, Dr. Morgentaler and Drs. Robert Scott and Leslie Smoling were acquitted of charges laid in Toronto the year before, a major victory in a trial in which the crown attorney equated Morgentaler, an Auschwitz survivor, with Hitler. The judge all but ordered the jury to convict. As we wrote in "All Honor to Dr. Morgentaler!" (*Spartacist Canada* No. 62, November 1984), "Even by standards of bourgeois 'justice' the trial was stacked against the doctors, and aimed at whipping up an anti-abortion frenzy." Outrageously, the Ontario attorney general appealed, and yet another jury acquittal was set aside and a new trial ordered. Morgentaler in turn appealed to the federal Supreme Court. No friend of women's rights, the court evidently saw that putting Morgentaler behind bars was a losing battle and accordingly determined that the abortion laws were unconstitutional.

The anti-woman bigots quickly launched a counteroffensive. As in the U.S., the violence of the 1980s gave way to the even more murderous and open terror against abortion providers of the 1990s. Morgentaler's Toronto clinic was firebombed and destroyed in 1992. Eight doctors have been murdered in the U.S. since 1977 and there have been many more attempted murders. In Canada in 1994, Dr. Garson Romalis barely survived gunshot wounds; in 2000 he was again injured by an anti-abortion would-be murderer. In the 1990s, two other Canadian abortion providers, Drs. Hugh Short and Jack Fainman, were shot and injured.

The anti-abortion forces want to bring back the days when abortion was illegal and untold numbers of women were butchered or mutilated by back-alley or self-induced abortions. Although abortion

Spartacist Canada

Trotskyist League of Canada marches in Toronto on International Women's Day, 1982.

continues to be legal, the steady drumbeat of anti-abortion reaction has recently become louder. Largely hidden from view is the continued threat of violence against abortion providers.

Conservative [Party] prime minister Stephen Harper's hard-right coterie—including his cabinet—is full of religious "end-of-days" revivalists who are vicious opponents of abortion, gay rights, women's rights, evolution and much else. His tenure has greatly increased the influence of Christian fundamentalists in Ottawa. Recent years have seen a flurry of reactionary bills introduced by anti-abortion MPs [Members of Parliament]. One would have made killing a fetus a separate offence when a pregnant woman was murdered. Another sought to create a parliamentary committee to debate when human life begins. More recently, three Tory MPs demanded that the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] investigate hundreds of abortions as "homicides," while anti-abortion bigots have started campaigning against "sex-selective" abortions as a wedge to roll back abortion rights.

The attacks on abortion rights are heavily conditioned by the level of class struggle. The working class has the social power necessary to mobilize in defense of women's rights and those of all the oppressed. Many Canadian unions support abortion rights. But the union movement has been on the defensive for many years, and the gains won through past struggles are being rolled back everywhere by a ruling class bent on ensuring that the working class pays for the economic crisis of the capitalist system. The leaders of the unions aim to contain working-class struggle within the bounds of capitalism.

Capitalism and Women's Liberation

Shaped by the torment of the Holocaust, Henry Morgentaler was driven, in his own words, "to feel vibrant, enjoying life, and to become a full person. To be open to experience—active and useful.... Active, as a sort of mover of history, doing something useful and important." This powerful impulse led him to believe that "under some circumstances, it is imperative to defy authority" (*Morgentaler: The Doctor Who Couldn't Turn Away*). He was an exuberant and talented man who spoke Polish, Yiddish, French and English, and could soothe a patient in almost any language. He loved women, had many affairs and was married three times. He never really stopped fighting on behalf of women and their rights.

An atheist, Morgentaler found in secular humanism a worldview that satisfied him. He was not a Marxist, but he agreed to be interviewed for our Marxist journal *Women and Revolution* in 1983. His interests in fighting on behalf of the oppressed went well beyond the question of abortion rights. A decade after the *W&R* interview, he joined other prominent intellectuals internationally in saluting a successful anti-Nazi action carried out by our German comrades, writing: "As a survivor of the Nazi Holocaust I commend the supporters of the Spartakist Workers Party and the Committee for Social Defense for removing the swastika flag near the Brandenburg Gate" (see *Spartacist Canada* No. 91, Spring 1993).

Henry Morgentaler's personal and political history testifies to the fact that abortion is not a narrow "women's issue." Indeed, it is a *class* issue: an essential democratic right, the removal of which would redound against *all* working people. The status of women is inextricably linked to that of the working class, which is uniquely situated to bring capitalist rule, the basis for women's oppression today, to an end. The liberation of women requires a socialist revolution that will uproot the private property system and create a worldwide socialized planned economy. Only then will society be able to replace the institution of the family with socialized childcare and housework, bringing women into full participation in all areas of social and political life.

This perspective requires the forging of a revolutionary vanguard party, entailing a struggle in the working class to break the hold of the social-democratic NDP, which is committed to upholding the rule of capital. Understanding that the interests of the capitalists and the workers are counterposed, such a party would intervene into social struggle as the most historically conscious and advanced element of the proletariat. It would defend the rights of minorities and Native people. It would advocate Quebec independence to oppose the dominant Anglo chauvinism and get the national question off the agenda. It would champion free abortion on demand, fighting for the program of women's liberation through socialist revolution. This is the perspective fought for by the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste, and it is in this spirit that we say: All honour to Dr. Morgentaler! ■

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Young Spartacus

Not One Person, Not One Penny for the Imperialist Military!

Ronald Haeberle — AFP

Victims of U.S. imperialist slaughter.

ROTC Off Campus!

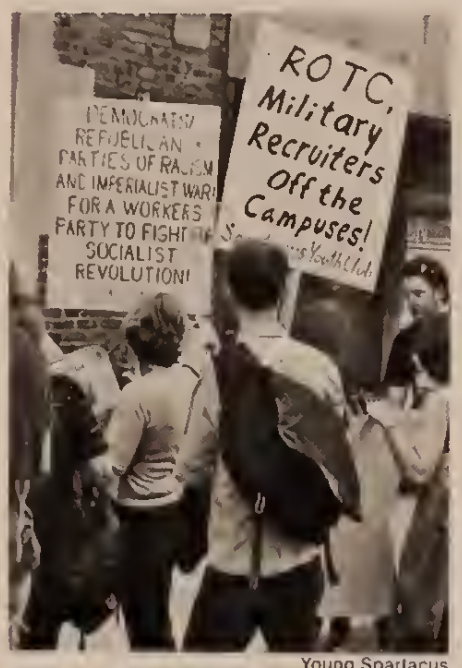
The U.S. military's Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) is now returning to the City College of New York (CCNY) for the first time in over 40 years. Forced off CCNY and over 100 other campuses by the militant struggles against the Vietnam War, ROTC is a program that trains students to become the next generation of officers whose job will be to carry out U.S. imperialist slaughter around the globe. The Spartacus Youth Clubs oppose the imperialists, their war aims and their armed forces, upholding German revolutionary Wilhelm Liebknecht's call: "Not a man and not a penny" for bourgeois militarism!

From the atomic incineration of civilians in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, to the dirty wars in Central America that slaughtered leftist insurgents, to today's global "war on terror," U.S. imperialism—under both Democratic and Republican administrations—has proven to be the most powerful terrorist force on the planet. It sits on the largest stockpile of operational nuclear weapons and has a military budget greater than that of the next 19 countries combined.

The Democratic Obama administration is infamous for its "Terror Tuesday" meetings to decide which Pakistanis, Yemenis and U.S. citizens to assassinate in drone strikes. The Commander-in-Chief orders his officers to oversee the torture of Guantánamo prisoners, including through force-feeding. And as we go to press, Obama is putting the finishing touches on his plan to bombard Syria. *Hands off Syria! U.S. out of the Near East!*

Domestically, the military is a key tool for suppressing dissent and carrying out strikebreaking. The U.S. rulers sent the National Guard to Los Angeles to crush the 1965 Watts ghetto rebellion and the 1992 upheaval sparked by the acquittal of the LAPD cops who beat black motorist Rodney King. In 1970, the same troops who massacred four antiwar protesters at Kent State University had been dispatched straight from strikebreaking duty against Cleveland Teamsters. In 2011, Obama deployed the military against ILWU Local 21 during the struggle between the longshoremen's union and the bosses in Washington State. At home and abroad, these are the jobs for which ROTC is training students.

While carrying out its crimes against the world's peoples, the Obama White House has prosecuted twice as many whistle-blowers as all previous administrations combined. U.S. Army Pfc. Chelsea (formerly Bradley) Manning, a 25-year-old hero, was tortured, subjected to a military show trial and sentenced to 35 years under the Espionage Act for the "crime" of releasing to the world classified documents showing only a fraction of the horrors carried out by the U.S. military. Through its treatment of Manning and its unrelenting war on Edward Snowden and WikiLeaks' Julian Assange, the White House is sending a message that it will tolerate no dissent or exposure of its war crimes, its massive spy operations and its shredding of basic democratic rights. *Free Manning now! Hands off Snowden and Assange!*



Young Spartacus

SYC protests against General Petraeus in New York, June 26.

Petraeus, ROTC, Military Recruiters Off Campus!

The City University of New York (CUNY), which has 24 campuses including CCNY, has granted General David Petraeus a visiting professorship at Macaulay Honors College. The résumé of this former CIA director and commander in Iraq and Afghanistan includes overseeing the torture of insurgents and civilians; directing drone strike assassinations; and heading up the CIA spy apparatus that, for decades, has organized to destabilize and overthrow elected governments that are not to Washington's liking, and to install its lackeys.

The halls of CUNY campuses are crawling with academic ideologues for U.S. imperialism. But Petraeus is different: he has the blood of thousands of Iraqis, Afghans and others on his hands. He should be driven off campus—*not far his views, but for his deeds.* We are in favor of students, teachers and campus workers driving imperialist war criminals off campus through protest and exposure. Last fall, when NATO's Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen came to campus, the SYC initiated a protest against him (see "SYC Protests NATO at CCNY," *WV* No. 1011, 26 October 2012).

Many campuses have been welcoming back ROTC, especially after Obama's 2011 repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT). For years, many reformists and liberals based their protests against ROTC solely on the U.S. military's institutionalized anti-gay bigotry. We protest all forms of discrimination, including in the military. At the same time, our opposition to ROTC is based not on the multitude of anti-democratic features of the U.S. armed forces, but on our dedication to the destruction of imperialism and opposition to its depredations worldwide.

We fight against every attempt by the ruling class to use college campuses as direct training grounds for the agents of U.S. imperialism. But academic institutions are not "ivory towers" isolated from the rest of capitalist society; rather they serve the needs of the capitalists. The CCNY administration was *never* against ROTC or the U.S. military. When it dropped ROTC from campus in 1971 in response to student protests, it simultaneously encouraged the setup of a regional ROTC center to serve CCNY off-campus. The administration is the agent of the ruling class on campus. *Abolish the administration! For student, teacher, worker control of the universities!*

The Revolutionary Student Coordinating Committee (RSCC), a Maoist student group active at CUNY campuses, wants the administration to be wielded for "revolutionary" ends. The RSCC Platform states, "We want teachers who suppress progressive and revolutionary ideas to be removed." This is a despicable call to purge teachers and feeds into the nationwide crusade against the teachers unions, spearheaded by the White House and directed in New York City by Bloomberg's administration. We side with the teachers unions against the wholesale attacks on public education, including the attempts to shred seniority rights and tenure.

In its July 13 leaflet "Hands off Assata Shakur! Eyes on David Petraeus! Stop the Militarization of CUNY!" the RSCC claims, "We find two tendencies within the legacy of CUNY: one revolutionary and one reactionary." It fatuously declares: "We must view CUNY as an ideological front against the bourgeoisie and imperialism, particularly US imperialism!" While the RSCC peddles the myth of a potentially anti-imperialist state-run college, the SYCs expose and protest the administrators, who unleash the cops to quash student protest. In 2005, three CCNY students and one staff member were arrested and brutalized by the cops for protesting military recruiters during a career fair. The students were also suspended (see "ROTC, Military Recruiters Off Campus Now!" *WV* No. 846, 15 April 2005).

We oppose signing up for the volunteer army. Correspondingly, we also oppose military conscription, which serves to turn the bulk of working-class youth into cannon fodder for imperialist wars. Since their humiliating military defeat in the Vietnam War, the U.S. rulers have been hesitant to reinstate the draft for fear of the public outrage this would cause. Yet, sooner or later, the U.S. ruling class will find it necessary to reinstate the draft. The duty of revolutionaries, if drafted, is to go into the military with the mass of young workers and seek to win the working-class ranks to the fight for socialist revolution (see "On Draft Resistance: You Will Go!" *Spartacist* No. 11, March-April 1968).

The U.S. rulers today catch poor and minority students in the vise of minimum-wage jobs and skyrocketing tuition, and many youth see no alternative to eternal debt peonage other than through a tuition break offered by joining ROTC and carrying out the imperialists' bidding. What is necessary is a fight to *abolish the student debt! For free, quality education and a state-paid living stipend for all!*

Democrats—The Other Party of Racism and War

Reformists and antiwar liberals would have you believe that imperialism is just

Soviet Woman Combat Pilot Fought Nazis

In Honor of Nadezhda Popova

World War II Soviet bomber pilot Nadezhda Popova died on July 8 at age 91. In her early 20s, she was Guards Captain of an elite corps of women pilots who were known as the "Night Witches" by Nazis who feared their nightly sorties. We honor Nadezhda Popova for her brave defense of the Soviet Union, homeland of the first successful workers revolution in history. At the cost of 27 million Soviet lives, it was primarily the USSR that smashed Hitler's war machine and ended the Holocaust.

The daughter of a railway worker, Nadezhda was born on 17 December 1921 and grew up in Donetsk, Ukraine. She was a wild spirit who loved to tango, foxtrot, sing along to jazz and run barefoot in the grass. She became passionate about flying after watching a pilot land near her house. "I thought, 'Oh my God! He's just an ordinary man!' We touched the wings of the plane and his leather jacket," she recalled decades later. "I had thought that they were some Hercules. And then I thought it would be great if I could fly like a bird."

Without telling her parents, the 15-year-old Nadezhda joined a flying club. At age 16, she made her first parachute jump and her first solo flight. She was trained at the aviation school in Kherson, Ukraine, and became a flying instructor, training 30 new pilots while still a teenager.

Her life was torn apart by the Nazi invasion of the USSR on 22 June 1941. Her home was taken over by German troops, and her brother Leonid was killed at the front. "My mother sobbed, 'That damn Hitler.' I saw the German aircraft flying along our roads filled with people who were leaving their homes, firing at them with their machine guns."

Stalin left the USSR criminally unprepared for the war. During the Moscow show trials of 1936-38 he purged the entire Red Army leadership and executed the best generals. Despite desperate warnings from Communists in Germany and elsewhere, Stalin refused to believe that the Nazis would attack the USSR. The defeats of the Red Army in 1941 forced the bureaucracy to initiate mass campaigns to induct women like Nadezhda into the military. The Stalinists did this in spite of their reactionary glorification of "women's role" as household drudge, which was of a piece with their anti-internationalist program of building "socialism in one country" and their Great Russian chauvinism. Unlike Stalin & Co., who used nationalist ideology to motivate the defense of the USSR, our Trotskyist defensism was internationalist: the Soviet Union's collectivized economy was an advance over capitalism and a conquest for all the world's workers and oppressed.

Nearly one million Soviet women served at the front as soldiers, snipers, machine gunners, field medics, tank drivers and partisan fighters behind enemy lines. Nadezhda Popova, then age 19, was one of the first to join the all-women 588th Night Bomber Regiment. She flew old Polikarpov PO-2 biplanes made of fabric strung over plywood frames with no radio, no guns, no parachutes, and only enough weight allowance for two bombs. Flying under enemy radar at night, Popova would dive full-throttle through enemy searchlights, swerving and dancing, acting as a decoy for another pilot who would glide in with the engine shut off and drop her payload. Then the second pilot would act as a decoy so that Popova could drop her bombs. To the sleepless Germans, the swishing glide of the silent planes of the 588th sounded like a witch's broomstick passing, and so they called them the *Nachthexen* (see "The Story of the Night Witches," *Women and Revolution* No. 36, Spring 1989).

RIA Novosti

Pilots of the 588th Night Bomber Regiment: Nadezhda Popova (standing), Irina Sebrova (left) and Vera Belik (right).

Nadezhda Popova made 852 sorties during WWII; she made 18 sorties over Poland in a single night in 1944. She also dropped lifesaving food and medicine to Russian marines stranded at Malaya Zemlya in 1942, flying so low she could hear the men's cheers. Afterward she found 42 bullet holes in her plane. For her skill and bravery, she was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

WWII German fighter ace Hauptmann Johannes Steinhoff, commander of II./JG52, paid a compliment to Popova and her comrades in a letter on 2 September 1942: "We simply couldn't grasp that the Soviet airmen that caused us the greatest trouble were in fact women. These women feared nothing. They came night after night in their very slow biplanes, and for some periods, they wouldn't give us any sleep at all" (quoted in Henry Sakaida, *Heroines of the Soviet Union*, Osprey, 2003). The Nazi high command reportedly promised to award an Iron Cross to any Luftwaffe pilot who managed to bring down a Night Witch.

In an unusually moving tribute, the bourgeois *Economist* magazine (20 July) described Popova's pain endured as friends died defending the Soviet Union:

> "The worst, though, was to lose friends. Eight died in a single sortie once when she was lead pilot, as hulking Messerschmitts attacked them in the dazzle of the searchlights. To right and left each tiny PO-2 went down like a falling torch. She never cried as much as when she returned to base and saw the girls' bunks, still strewn with letters they had never finished writing."

The pilots and navigators of the 586th, 587th and 588th regiments—as well as the female ground crews who armed and maintained their planes—were crucial to several key battles, such as in the oil-rich Caucasus, Stalingrad and Kursk, that turned the tide of the war against the Nazis (see Bruce Myles, *Night Witches: The Untold Story of Soviet Women in Combat*, 1981). Many also flew missions around Berlin in the war's final days. In Berlin, Popova reunited with pilot Semyon Kharlamov, whom she had met and fallen in love with after they both got shot down in July 1942. After the war she married him, had a son and worked as a flying instructor.

Our party has a proud history of defending the Soviet degenerated workers state and fighting against the 1991-92 counterrevolutionary destruction of the USSR, a historic defeat for the working class and oppressed worldwide. We called for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy and to restore the revolutionary internationalist program of Lenin and Trotsky. Such is our perspective today for China, North Korea, Vietnam, Laos and Cuba—countries where capitalism has been overthrown but where political power is monopolized by parasitic Stalinist bureaucracies.

Working-class women have proven in every revolutionary struggle that they are among the best fighters for the liberation of their class. The fight for women's liberation means a struggle for international socialist revolution. Among the best cadres in this struggle will be new generations of women, who will draw inspiration from heroic fighters of the past including Nadezhda Popova and the Night Witches of World War II. ■

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a militaristic "policy" that the ruling class can scrap if they are pressured hard enough through protests, elections or moral suasion. In his classic work on the subject, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916), Lenin explained why imperialism is not a set of particular policies, but the final stage of capitalism in its decay. The words of our Trotskyist forebears, written over 80 years ago, are still true:

> "It is necessary, however, to understand that war is an integral part of capitalism. Every national section of capitalism depends upon its military arm for the defense of the same. War is the practical means through which one or the other capitalist state acquires control of the world market. The armed forces of a capitalist state has a twofold function: on the one hand the defense of the interests of the state externally, and on the other, the weapon by which the working class is kept in subjection at home. When this is understood it will become quite clear why the 'outlawing' of war can come about only through the destruction of capitalism."
>
> —"Imperialist War and the Class Struggle," *Young Spartacus*, March 1932

To abolish imperialist militarism and capitalist exploitation, it is necessary to organize the social power of the working class for socialist revolution. Students by themselves do not have the social power necessary to transform society. They must ally themselves with the multiracial working class, which can physically bring capitalist production to a halt. The working class has the capacity to drive the bosses from power and establish workers rule. Only workers revolution can smash U.S. imperialism!

Returning a fifth of the world's population in China to capitalist enslavement is today the ultimate prize sought by the imperialists. Anyone who is seriously committed to fighting U.S. imperialism must take a firm stand in defense of China and the other bureaucratically deformed workers states—Vietnam, North Korea, Laos and Cuba—without giving any political support to the Stalinist bureaucracies. Genuine opposition to U.S. imperialism requires the unconditional military defense of the countries where capitalism has been overthrown.

Fighting against imperialism means fighting for the working class and militant youth to break from the parties of the class enemy. But the RSCC is doing the exact opposite. Founded in February 2012, the RSCC was or is affiliated with the pro-Democrat Freedom Road Socialist Organization (FRSO). RSCC supporters have verbally claimed to us that this relationship has ended, but we have looked in vain for any evidence of such a rupture. Where is the RSCC's written position on the FRSO's 2008 endorsement of Obama, the candidate of the class enemy? (See "Freedom Road Socialist Organization: Democrats' Loyal Maoists," *WV* No. 1004, 8 June 2012.) So stung were they by this exposure of the FRSO that, on March 16, the RSCC organizers outrageously threatened to call the cops on our comrades who were distributing this *WV* article outside an RSCC forum!

The Democratic Party, in fact, is the bourgeoisie's preferred party to lead it into war. Democratic Party administrations led World Wars I and II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and the wars against Serbia and Libya. And it is on Obama's watch that the ruling class is waging its ideological war to mop up any vestiges of the "Vietnam syndrome" and get the ROTC operations back up and running openly rather than in a semi-covert way.

For all their "revolutionary" rhetoric, red flag waving and occasional criticisms of Obama, these Maoists do not breathe a word of opposition to the capitalist Democratic Party in the RSCC Platform, Constitution, or Points of Unity. Currently the RSCC, together with the centrist Internationalist Group (IG), is spearheading the

continued on page 11

Egypt: For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

This article concludes below. Parts One and Two appeared in WV *Nos. 1027 and 1028 (12 July and 9 August).*

Since deposing President Mohamed Morsi in a coup on July 3, the Egyptian military has massacred adherents of Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood, most graphically in clearing two protest encampments in mid August, and imprisoned much of its leadership. In the name of fighting the Islamists, the crackdown has been extended to striking workers, journalists and liberal activists. The struggle between the military and the Muslim Brotherhood—both reactionary forces—has set off a new wave of violence against the oppressed Coptic Christian minority. Historically, Egypt's military-backed strongmen have alternately repressed the Brotherhood and unleashed it against leftists and workers struggles.

The ascendancy of political Islam as a mass movement of religious fundamentalism based on the lower middle classes and the poor has been a reactionary response to the manifest dead end of bourgeois nationalism in the semicolonial countries of the Muslim world in the absence of a communist alternative. Though looking to the 7th century for inspiration, political Islam emerged out of the oppressive conditions of the 20th century.

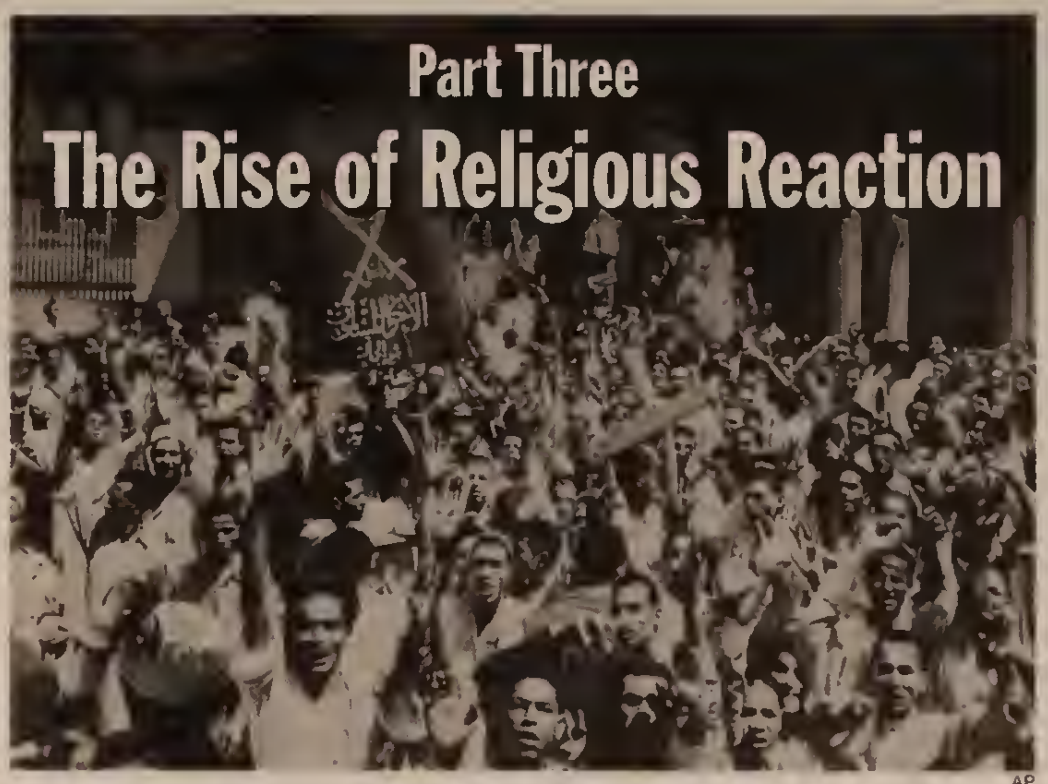
With their social expectations born in the struggle for national emancipation shattered, the dispossessed masses—desperate, ragged, illiterate, unemployed or forced to labor for a pittance—find solace in religion and comfort in the false hope of happiness in the hereafter. Noting that "*Man makes religion*, religion does not make man," Karl Marx wrote:

> "*Religious* distress is at the same time the *expression* of real distress and also the *protest* against real distress. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of spiritless conditions. It is the *opium* of the people.... To abolish religion as the *illusory* happiness of the people is to demand their *real* happiness. The demand to give up illusions about the existing state of affairs is the *demand to give up a state of affairs which needs illusions*."
>
> —"Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law: Introduction" (1843-44)

It is not only the solace of superstition that the Islamists offer to attract the downtrodden but also some very material social services. With funding from Saudi Arabia and other oil-rich sheikdoms, Egyptian fundamentalists established wide networks, centered around the country's more than 170,000 mosques, for providing services the state does not deliver. In her book, *A Portrait of Egypt: A Journey Through the World of Militant Islam* (1999), journalist Mary Anne Weaver described how the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamists had built their own welfare system in the impoverished Imbaba district of Cairo. For example, mosques under the control of al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya, the hardline Islamic Group, provided meat at wholesale prices and set up discount clinics, schools and day-care centers as well as furniture factories where the unemployed got work. Weaver observed:

> "Despite an aggressive $10 million social program launched by the government at the end of 1994, the Islamists' institutions remained generally far more efficient and far superior to run-down government facilities. Along with the collapse of every secular ideology embraced by Egyptian politicians and intellectuals during this century, it was government repression and ineptitude, far more than militants' guns and bombs, that was fueling the Islamic flame."

Part Three
The Rise of Religious Reaction



AP

Muslim Brotherhood supporters in Cairo, 1947. Brotherhood was used as shock troops against striking workers and leftists by monarchy.

Muslim Brotherhood: Enemy of Workers, Women

Founded in 1928, Egypt's Society of Muslim Brothers was the prototype for subsequent Islamic movements in other countries. The writings of its early leaders Hassan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb have been translated into all the languages of the Muslim world and remain the prime sources for those who aspire to overthrow "impious" society and build an Islamic state on its ruins.

Indonesian Islamist leader Amien Rais paid tribute to the Muslim Brotherhood by writing his doctoral thesis on the movement. Egyptian Islamist teachers brought in by the Algerian government in the 1970s as part of an "Arabization" scheme were instrumental in building a base for the Islamic Salvation Front, which went on to wage a bloody but unsuccessful civil war against the nationalist military regime in the 1990s. Muslim Brotherhood leaders fleeing repression in Egypt contributed to the growth of the fundamentalist movement in Jordan, while the Palestinian Hamas originated as a branch of the Brotherhood. Sudanese and Syrian youth studying in Egypt carried home the seeds of the Brotherhood, establishing regional branches in the 1930s and '40s.

The Muslim Brotherhood was founded in the period following the bourgeois-nationalist Wafd party's failure to achieve independence through the 1919 uprising against British rule. Its establishment was a reactionary response to the abolition of the caliphate, the 1,300-year-old system of Islamic rule, by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the nationalist founder of modern Turkey, in 1923. The Brotherhood's purpose, expressed in the slogan "the Koran is our constitution," was to establish an Islamic state modeled on the caliphate of the 7th century. The organization began to grow explosively during the Great Depression of the 1930s, when the educated sons of the petty bourgeoisie could no longer count on secure government jobs after graduation. Disenfranchised urban youth gravitated toward radical organizations—many to the Muslim Brothers on the right, others to the fledgling Communists. Soon the Brotherhood swelled into a mass movement of hundreds of thousands.

During the upsurge in class and social struggle in 1945-46, the monarchy used the Muslim Brotherhood as shock troops against striking workers, Communists and the left-nationalist Wafdist Vanguard. The Brotherhood established a base of support among factory owners, foremen and backward workers, fingering strike leaders for state repression and attempting to undermine or destroy militant unions. The Communist-led Congress of Private-Sector Trade Unions issued a statement denouncing the Brotherhood for "fascist methods using their sticks" against leftist students and workers at the combative Shubra al-Khayma textile mill and "for [religious] sectarianism aimed at splitting the ranks of the people for the benefit of imperialism." The statement concluded with a sharp warning to "worker colleagues against joining any committee formed by the Muslim Brothers" (quoted in Joel Beinin and Zachary Lockman, *Workers on the Nile: Nationalism, Communism, Islam, and the Egyptian Working Class, 1882-1954* [1987]).

But the Brotherhood's growing strength soon alarmed the monarchy itself. After a series of assassinations of government officials and other violence attributed to the Brotherhood, the organization was banned in 1948. Secret service agents assassinated al-Banna the following year.

Colonel Nasser, supported by Islamists and Stalinists alike, pragmatically embraced the Brothers in an effort to win their mass base and to use them against the Stalinists. Six weeks after the 1952 military coup that brought his Free Officers Movement to power, the Nasser regime executed two strike leaders. The Brotherhood hailed the act, calling on the government to "strike these Communists...with an iron hand so that they are driven to their dens" (quoted in *Workers on the Nile*).

The honeymoon ended in 1954 when a Brotherhood member allegedly attempted to assassinate Nasser. By that time, the Islamists had served their purpose in helping to suppress the Communists, and the regime had built a wider base of support, including through limited land reforms. Six Brotherhood leaders were executed and thousands of its members jailed. The crackdown culminated in the 1966 execution of Sayyid Qutb.

Keystone

Police attack striking workers at Mahalla al-Kobra factory near Cairo, September 1947.

Sadat Rearms Islamists

Nasser, who died in 1970, was replaced by his protégé and vice president, Anwar Sadat, a former adherent of the Muslim Brotherhood. Sadat would go on to cancel Egypt's "friendship" treaty with the Soviet Union and order the withdrawal of Soviet military advisers, paving the way for closer ties with the United States. He launched his policy of *infitah*—economic liberalization based on an open door to imperialist investment—whereby key industries were denationalized and Nasser's land reform was scrapped. Sadat's policies drew increasing opposition from Nasserites as well as Communists and other leftist elements.

To deflect growing anger over the country's perpetual economic crisis, Sadat fostered mysticism and superstition. He made

several pilgrimages to Mecca and acquired the title of "pious president." He affirmed Nasser's declaration that Islam was the state religion and decreed that *sharia* was the prime source of state law. Thousands of mosques were built and prayer rooms were added to office buildings. Day and night on television screens, robed, turbaned and bearded sheiks expounded the virtues and morals of Islamic society. Pedestrians were bombarded with taped Friday sermons blaring from newsstands, food carts and passing taxicabs. The 1973 military offensive that inflicted a black eye on Israel was launched by Sadat in the month of Ramadan and code-named "Badr" after the Prophet's first victorious battle in 624. And the battle cry was "God is great."

Initiating in 1971 what he called the "Rectification Movement," Sadat arrested Nasser's chief lieutenants and suppressed a student revolt the next year. He released imprisoned Islamists and enabled them to gain control of the Egyptian Student Union, the prime objective of which, according to a 1976 presidential decree, was now "to deepen religious values among the students" (Gilles Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt* [2003]). By 1977, the Islamists held sway over student unions on a national scale. Using the considerable funds and facilities now at their disposal, they organized "Islamic summer camps" where thousands of students received religious and paramilitary training with the patronage of the rector of the state-financed Al Azhar, the world's leading Islamic institution, and other regime officials.

The fundamentalists wielded such power that university campuses were turned into "terra Islamica." Iron bars in hand, thugs attacked couples and unveiled women. They banned movies, concerts and evening dances. Rampaging through

Jahangir Razmi

Khomeini's 1979 "Islamic Revolution" carried out bloody repression against minorities, leftists.

the city's nightclubs, they smashed windows and beat belly dancers. The fundamentalists subsidized Islamic dress for women and offered segregated buses for those who wore the veil. Emboldened by Sadat's imprisonment of Coptic Christian religious leaders, Islamists planted bombs at churches in Cairo. Prayer rallies staged on religious holidays drew hundreds of thousands; in Cairo, the rallies were held in the square facing Abdin Palace, the presidential residence. It was perhaps out of gratitude that Islamist Egyptian president Mohamed Morsi laid a wreath at Sadat's tomb last October, an honor that Sadat had never before received in the three decades since his death.

The Islamists' agenda went well beyond the role designated for them by Sadat's regime. Kepel wrote:

> "The infrastructure they were establishing, and the cadres they were training in the summer camps and Islamic study weeks, were well prepared for the possibility of taking on tasks other than smashing the Nasserist and Communist left for the benefit of the ruling group. As far as they were concerned, although Nasserism had been an especially execrable period of *jahiliyya* [ignorance], fundamentally the Sadat era was scarcely any better. Its internal contradictions, however, had enabled the [Islamic] *jama'at* to grow in the regime's shadow."

Sadat's trip to Israel in 1977 marked the beginning of the rift with the Islamic

New York Review of Books

White House, 1953: President Eisenhower meets with group of Islamist delegates, seeking to build anti-Communist alliance during Cold War. Muslim Brotherhood leader Said Ramadan is second from right.

fundamentalists, sealed by his signing of the 1979 accords that made Egypt the first Arab state to recognize Israel. Sadat trumpeted the return of Sinai to Egypt, but his embrace of the "Jewish state" was the ultimate sacrilege in the eyes of the Islamists. In 1981, he was assassinated by army officers and soldiers from al-Jihad, one of the Islamist groups that had sprouted in the fertile ground Sadat had nurtured.

Repressed by Sadat's successor Hosni Mubarak, Islamic fundamentalists carried out a terror campaign targeting tourists, Copts and secular intellectuals in the 1990s. Faraj Fawdah, a radical liberal intellectual and lifelong crusader against religious zealotry and obscurantism, was assassinated in 1992. In 1994, an attempt was made on the life of Nobel laureate Naguib Mahfouz, a novelist who wrote compassionately about homosexuals and prostitutes and of the lives of women in general. Three years later, 58 tourists were massacred in Luxor.

Iran 1979: Ascent of Islamic Reaction

Sadat was not the only Near Eastern leader to foster Islamic reaction. In the early 1980s, Turkey's military rulers, self-proclaimed guardians of secularism, spurred the growth of Islamic fundamentalism in their effort to suppress leftists and trade unionists. Religious instruction was made compulsory at all pre-university levels, and religious schools for imams were set up. These schools became seedbeds for Islamic ideology and provided leaders for the Islamist movement, including those who would go on to found current Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's Justice and Development Party (AKP). The Zionist rulers of Israel consciously encouraged the growth of Hamas as a counter to the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), with General Yitzhak Segev, former military governor of Gaza, admitting: "We extend some financial aid to Islamic groups via mosques and religious schools in order to help create a force that would stand against the leftist forces which support the PLO" (quoted in Joel Beinin and Joe Stork, eds., *Political Islam* [1997]).

"To some extent fundamentalism was of our own making, and was at one time encouraged in order to combat the threat of communism," Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali, then the bonapartist ruler of Tunisia, told the London *Financial Times* in a 1994 interview. "Such groups were fostered in the universities and elsewhere at that time in order to offset the communists and to strike a balance" (quoted in *Political Islam*). Decades earlier, the U.S. imperialists had embraced Islamists and other religious reactionaries in the Cold War against "godless communism."

It was the Ayatollah Khomeini's rise to power in Iran in early 1979 that gave a huge impetus to the growth of Islamic reaction in the Near East. This was not inevitable. The Stalinist Tudeh party had the allegiance of the mass of the working class. Militant struggles by the Iranian proletariat, especially the strategic oil workers, played a pivotal role in the ouster of the hated, U.S.-backed Shah, posing the possibility of a fight for workers power. Yet in the name of "anti-imperialism," Tudeh and other Iranian left groups threw their support to the mullah-dominated opposition led by Khomeini, as did the bulk of ostensibly socialist organizations internationally. Khomeini swept into power, and the result was a massive bloodbath against unveiled women, leftists, trade unionists and Kurds, among others.

As we note in the International Communist League's Declaration of Principles (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 54, Spring 1998):

> "The 1979 'Iranian Revolution' opened up a period of ascendant political Islam in the historically Muslim world, a development which contributed to and was powerfully reinforced by the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union. Khomeini's seizure and consolidation of power in Iran was a defeat akin to Hitler's crushing of the German proletariat in 1933, albeit on a narrower, regional scale. The international Spartacist tendency's slogan 'Down with the Shah! No support to the mullahs!' and our focus on the woman question ('No to the veil!') stood in sharp opposition to the rest of the left's capitulation to mullah-led reaction."

Religious fanaticism, which is especially oppressive to women, is not a uniquely Islamic phenomenon. Among Protestant televangelists, ultra-Orthodox Jews, Catholic Opus Dei adherents and Hindutva fundamentalists, there is no lack of zealots who believe they have a god-given mission to impose the dictates of their particular "holy scriptures" and to exterminate the faithless; pogroms by Buddhist mobs against the Muslim Rohingya minority in Myanmar (Burma) are a recent example. The outlook of Islamists who see unveiled women and leftists as infidels deserving the wrath of god is not fundamentally different from that of Christian bigots who terrorize abortion providers in the U.S. or of fascistic Zionists who spray Palestinians with bullets in the middle of their dawn prayers.

What makes Islamic fundamentalism stand out is the particular historical development of the region where it flourishes. In West Europe, sections of Christianity and Judaism, which like Islam and other religions have their roots in pre-capitalist society, were driven to adapt to rising capitalism and its material advances over backward, feudal society. Islam did not have to adapt in the same way. Until the 16th century, the Muslim societies of North Africa and the Near East were qualitatively more advanced than Catholic Europe. But centuries of stagnation and decay under Ottoman rule sealed the Islamic world from the Renaissance, Enlightenment rationalism and the Industrial Revolution. As Ottoman power waned, colonial occupation fettered capitalist development and reinforced social backwardness as a prop to its domination. Analogous in some key ways to pre-Reformation Christianity, Islam asserts control over all aspects of individuals' lives in societies where religion and state have never been separated.

Afghanistan: Imperialists Foment Religious Reaction

During the period of the bourgeois revolutions of the 17th and 18th centuries, the nascent capitalist classes wielded science against religious obscurantism in their struggle to destroy the feudal barriers to capitalist development. But in its imperialist epoch of decline and decay, capitalism has increasingly fostered retrograde beliefs. In their drive to destroy the Soviet Union and stem the tide of Communism everywhere, the imperialists have allied themselves with all manner of religious obscurantists—from the Dalai Lama to the Indonesian Islamic Masyumi and the Afghan *mujahedin*. John Foster Dulles, who would serve as U.S. Secretary of State at the height of the Cold War, declared in 1950: "The religions of the East are deeply rooted and have many precious values. Their spiritual beliefs cannot be reconciled with Communist atheism and materialism. That creates a common bond between us, and our task is to find it and develop it" (quoted in Paul Baran, *The Political Economy of Growth* [1968]).

Immediately after World War II, the U.S. recruited Soviet Muslims, including many who had fought alongside the Nazis, for its covert operations against the USSR. Some were used by Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty to air anti-Soviet propaganda. In 1953, President Eisenhower invited three dozen Islamist leaders, including from the Muslim Brotherhood, to the White House to enlist them in Washington's anti-Communist crusade. Dulles' common bond was called into service in 1965-66 when the CIA backed the slaughter of over a million Indonesian leftists, workers and others at the hands of the army and Islamists. It was further cemented in the anti-Soviet *jihad* in Afghanistan in the 1980s.

Upon taking power in Afghanistan in 1978, the modernizing, pro-Soviet People's Democratic Party (PDPA) government embarked on a program of reforms: canceling peasant debts, carrying out land redistribution, prohibiting forced marriages and lowering the bride price to a nominal sum. The PDPA's measures, particularly those aimed at freeing women from feudal tyranny, threatened the mullahs' stranglehold on social and economic life and provoked an immediate, murderous backlash.

Most explosively, the PDPA made schooling compulsory for girls and launched literacy programs for women, building 600 schools in just over a year. The tribal insurgents denounced schooling for women as the first step in a "life of shame," and the earliest bloody confrontations were over women's literacy, as PDPA cadres and women literacy workers were driven from villages and killed. A decree allowing women to divorce was not officially announced because of the revolt. Even the *New York Times* (9 February 1980) acknowledged, "It was the Kabul revolutionary government's granting of new rights to women that pushed Orthodox Moslem men in the Pashtoon villages of eastern Afghanistan into picking up their guns."

After repeated urgent appeals from the PDPA regime, in December 1979 the Soviet government sent troops to Afghanistan to prevent a victory by the *mujahedin* on the USSR's southern flank. This was a necessary act of military defense against imperialist counterrevolution. The conservative Kremlin bureaucracy certainly did not send 100,000 troops to effect a social revolution. However, an extended Soviet military presence opened the possibility of liberation for the peoples of that benighted land, especially women. We Trotskyists declared: "Hail Red Army!" and called to extend the social gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples.

Having helped provoke a Soviet military intervention, the imperialists seized on it as a pretext for a renewed Cold War offensive, using the woman-hating *mujahedin* cutthroats in a proxy war to kill Soviet soldiers. To this end, the CIA launched the biggest covert operation in its history, to the tune of many billions of dollars. Working through the Saudi monarchy and the Pakistani secret service, the imperialists coordinated the recruitment, arming and training of tens of thousands of "Arab Afghans" from around the world. The Egyptian Brotherhood was a linchpin in this "holy war." Freed from prison by Hosni Mubarak and sent to Afghanistan, its members formed a major *mujahedin* contingent. Important figures within the leadership regularly visited Afghanistan. The Brotherhood-controlled Egyptian Medical Syndicate organized and funded 95 percent of the doctors working for the Islamist forces.

continued on page 10

Syria...

(continued from page 1)

military presence in the Persian Gulf. The workers movement must demand imperialist military withdrawal from the Near East.

Imperialist "Democracy" and Chemical Warfare

Obama claims to he defending an "international norm" prohibiting the use of chemical weapons. The norm is that the imperialists are fully prepared to use any means, including poison gas and other "weapons of mass destruction," in pursuit of their interests. When imperialist forces intervened in Russia in 1919 in a failed attempt to crush the Russian Revolution, British warplanes bombarded Red Army troops with a chemical nerve agent. That same year, when Kurds in Mesopotamia rose in revolt against British occupation, Winston Churchill declared: "I do not understand the squeamishness about the use of gas. I am strongly in favour of using poisonous gas against uncivilised tribes."

The Washington politicians lamenting civilian casualties in Syria represent the only ruling class to have used atomic bombs in warfare, incinerating some 200,000 Japanese civilians in August 1945 in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. During the Vietnam War, U.S. forces employed massive quantities of Agent Orange defoliant and CS gas—the latter was used against insurgents holed up in tunnels—as well as burning alive untold numbers of Vietnamese villagers in napalm strikes. In Iraq, the U.S. used shells made of depleted uranium that produced radioactive dust. Scientists investigating widespread birth defects in Falluja describe it as now having "the highest rate of genetic damage in any population ever studied" and point to the depleted uranium as the likely culprit.

In 1975, the U.S. finally got around to signing the 1925 Geneva Protocol banning the use of chemical weapons, but Washington unilaterally retains the right to unleash them if an adversary uses them first. After a highly publicized promise to dispose of its gigantic stores of sarin and other chemical weapons, as of last year the U.S. still had some 2,700 tons in its stockpile.

During the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq War, the U.S. government was complicit as Saddam Hussein carried out horrific chemical weapons attacks. Determined to prevent an Iranian victory, Ronald Reagan's administratiun provided Iraqi forces with satellite photographs of Iranian troop deployments as well as critical hands-on assistance in planning for battles and airstrikes. The U.S. did so with full knowledge that Iraqi commanders had heen using chemical weapons against Iranian troops since 1983. Washington "wasn't so horrified by Iraq's use of gas," one U.S. veteran of the operation tuld the *New York Times* (18 August 2002). "It was just another way of killing people."

The sordid history of U.S. involvement in the atrocities carried out by the Hussein regime was highlighted by a number of recently declassified CIA documents published by *Foreign Policy* (26 August). A March 1984 CIA report noted that Iraq was using nerve gas and called it "a very good offensive as well as defensive weapon" that "could have a significant impact on Iran's human wave tactics, forcing Iran to give up that strategy." U.S. support to Iraqi forces continued right through the 1988 chemical weapons attack on the Kurdish town of Halabja, in which the Iraqi regime slaughtered 5,000 of its own citizens. That attack was later hypocritically decried by the George W. Bush administration as evidence of Saddam Hussein's brutality as the U.S. was gearing up for the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

As in the case of Saddam Hussein, Assad's past services to the imperialists were quickly forgotten once Washington decided that he no longer served their purposes. In the early years of the "war on terror," Syria was a prime destination in the "extraordinary rendition" program in which the U.S. sent terrorism suspects to other countries to be tortured. That didn't prevent the Obama administration, once civil war broke out in Syria, from providing financial support and small arms to some insurgents while ratcheting up economic sanctions that, along with those imposed by the European Union, have crippled the Syrian economy.

Even more punishing sanctions have been imposed on Iran, which Washington and Tel Aviv perceive as attempting to challenge the Israeli monopoly of nuclear arms in the region. Although the Iranian government denies that it is developing nuclear weapons, Iran clearly needs nukes as a deterrent to the imperialists. We demand: Down with the sanctions against Iran and Syria!

Workers Hammer

London, August 31: Spartacist contingent at "No Attack on Syria" demonstration.

For Class Struggle Against the Capitalist Rulers!

The basis for the communal conflagration that is erupting in the Near East was laid under colonial rule as the European powers set various nationalities and ethnic groups against each other. Syria, Lebanon and Iraq are not nations but rather patchworks of different peoples and ethnicities that were carved out of the collapsing Ottoman Empire by Britain and France following the First World War. In Syria, the imperialists promoted the Alawites to lord it over the predominantly Sunni population (see "Syrian Civil War: Legacy of Imperialist Divide-and-Rule," *WV* No. 1009, 28 Septemher 2012).

The international proletariat and semicolonial peoples are paying the price for the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92. That historic defeat resulted in a catastrophic devastation of living conditions and culture in the former Soviet Union. It has also emboldened U.S. imperialism, which proclaimed itself the "world's only superpower" while aggressively asserting its dominance over the globe. Today, the same reformist "socialists" who cheered the demise of the Soviet Union line up behind the imperialist-backed rebel forces in Syria, enthusing over a mythical Syrian revolution. A case in point is the International Socialist Organization (ISO), which touts the Local Coordination Committees (LCC), a network of local protest groups, as the "wellspring of the revolutionary muvement" in Syria (socialistworker.org, 28 August).

In fact, the LCC openly calls for U.S. military intervention in its country. In a September 1 statement posted on its Facebook page, the LCC criticizes Obama for planning a "limited strike to merely warn Assad" instead of seeking to "paralyze" the Syrian military. The LCC demands that Obama's military assault be "accumpanied by close coordination with, and sufficient support to the Syrian opposition, both political and armed."

The threatened attack against Syria represents the true face of imperialism, the profit-driven capitalist system in its epoch of decay. Military depredations are part of the "normal" workings of imperialism, in which the advanced industrial powers compete globally for control of markets, raw materials and access to cheap labor. This is reflected domestically in grinding poverty, racial oppression and intensified exploitation of labor by capital. The only way to put an end to this system is through international socialist revolution and the creation of a worldwide planned economy. We fight to build revolutionary workers parties as part of a reforged Trotskyist Fourth International to lead the proletariat in the struggle for power.■

Egypt...

(continued from page 9)

By the mid 1980s, the Red Army clearly had the *mujahedin* on the run. But the Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy pulled the troops out in 1988-89 in its further pursuit of the chimera of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism. We denounced this criminal betrayal not only of Afghan women and leftists but of the Soviet degenerated workers state, warning that it was hetter to fight the imperialists in Afghanistan than to have to fight them in the Soviet Union itself.

The pullout from Afghanistan paved the way for capitalist counterrevolution in East Europe and the USSR, a world-historic defeat for the proletariat internationally as well as for women, ethnic and national minorities and all the exploited and oppressed. The post-Soviet years have been marked by drastic declines in the living standards of working people and the poor, a tightened imperialist stranglehold on semicolonial peoples, intensified repression against immigrants and a sharp rise in racist and religious reaction. No longer constrained by the counterweight of the Soviet Union, U.S. imperialism has proclaimed a "one-superpower world" in which it is free to throw around its military might.

Afghanistan became once again a living hell for women. And the "Arab Afghans" spawned and nurtured by U.S. imperialism went on to foment reactionary movements elsewhere, tapping into deep popular resentment against brutal nationalist regimes and imperialist-dictated austerity. When this Frankenstein's monster turned on its creator in September 2001, the U.S. cynically declared its "war on terror." In turn, every new imperialist military attack in the Muslim world has driven fresh forces into the ranks of the Islamic fundamentalists.

Meanwhile, the "war on terror" has not ended the collaboration between Islamic fundamentalists and the imperialists. When in power, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, like their Turkish counterparts in the AKP, operated within the framework of the imperialists' hold on the region. As Perry Anderson observed at the time of Mubarak's downfall:

> "Earlier, the prospect of the Muslim Brotherhood or its regional affiliates entering government would have caused acute alarm in Washington. But the West now possesses a reassuring blueprint in Turkey for replication in the Arab lands, offering the best of all political worlds. The AKP has shown how loyal to NATO and to neo-liberalism, and how capable of the right doses of intimidation and repression, a pious yet liberal democracy, swinging the truncheon and the Koran, can be."
>
> —*New Left Review*, March-April 2011

A Proletarian Revolutionary Perspective

The march of social reaction and imperialist aggrandizement across much of the globe in the years since the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union demonstrates the enormity of that defeat. Accommodating to the bourgeoisie's false triumphalist declaration of the "death of communism," ostensibly socialist organizations the world over—most of which cheered the collapse of the Soviet Union—have washed away any taint of association with the Russian Revolution of 1917 and its Bolshevik leadership.

We in the ICL have not. The Bolshevik Revolution remains the high point of contemporary history and the guide for successful struggle against exploitation and oppression, with crucial lessons for fighters in Egypt and elsewhere in the Near East who seek an alternative to military bonapartism and Islamic reaction. It will take the revolutionary victory of the proletariat to break the fetters of imperialism and feudal-derived reaction—a perspective that must be linked to the fight for workers power in the imperialist centers.

Friends of Afghanistan Society

Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in the 1980s inspired Afghan women to take up arms against Islamic reaction.

The combative Egyptian proletariat must come to the fore at the head of all the oppressed, including religious and ethnic minorities as well as women, and fight for its own rule—a workers and peasants government. From Egypt's textile factories and Turkey's auto plants to Iran's oil fields, and in the Israeli Zionist garrison state as well, proletarian concentrations in the region point to the potential to sweep away all of its reactionary regimes and forge a socialist federation of the Near East. To carry out this task, the proletariat must be broken from bourgeois nationalism and all forms of religious backwardness. And that requires revolutionary leadership.

This may seem a distant perspective at present. But there will be no end to the exploitation of working people and no emancipation of women short of proletarian revolution. The very workings of the capitalist profit system, which in the economic crisis of the last five years have ravaged the lives and livelihoods uf workers around the world, sow the seeds of sharp class and social struggle. It is through intervening into such struggles, fighting for the political independence uf the proletariat from all bourgeois forces, that we seek to forge workers parties of the Bolshevik type as sections of a reforged Trotskyist Fourth International.■

Hunger Strike...

(continued from page 12)

> end of the 19th century, Blacks were a distinct minority of American prisoners. And while numbers certainly swelled post-slavery—to build the prison-contract-labor industry, really slavery by another name—the biggest bounce in Black imprisonment came in the aftermath of the Civil Rights and Black Liberation movements, when Black people, en masse, opposed the system of white supremacy, police brutality and racist juries."

Despite the hat-in-hand pro-Democratic Party politics of the civil rights leaders, not least Martin Luther King, America's rulers hated and feared the spectre of black militancy. They correctly saw it as a challenge to a system of class oppression rooted in the forcible segregation of the majority of the black population at the bottom of society. Despite the stone-cold racism of George Meany's AFL-CIO bureaucracy, labor struggles like the 1970 national postal strike in defiance of anti-strike laws amplified fears that such militancy would spill over into the organized working class with its battalions of black workers.

In 1971, Republican president Richard Nixon launched a "war on drugs," which centrally took aim at black militants and the inner-city poor on the heels of the ghetto upheavals of the 1960s. In 1973, following the bloodbath he launched against the 1971 Attica prison rebellion, New York State Governor Nelson Rockefeller enacted draconian drug laws that became a model for other states. The "war on drugs" went into overdrive under Ronald Reagan with the avid support of black Democrats like Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton. Today, nearly half of the 2.3 million people behind bars in the U.S. are black.

The deindustrialization of much of the U.S., exemplified today by the bankruptcy of "Motor City" Detroit, drove millions more black people out of the workforce and into the ranks of the permanently outcast. Having created the conditions

AP

Hundreds of inmates forced to live in overcrowded gymnasium at California's San Quentin prison, 2009.

condemning black as well as Latino youth to desperate poverty, the rulers branded them criminals and devised a maze of "anti-gang" laws aimed at funneling ever more of them into prison. Once again, the state of California was in the lead with its 1988 "Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention Act."

Wearing "gang clothing," having tattoos or being named by a "reliable" source is enough to be entered into the statewide CalGang database, which now has an estimated 200,000 names, including children as young as ten. Those in the database are not notified and there is no way to remove one's name. Such gang profiling begins in the schools, where poor and minority youth are branded for life. Latinos have been a particular target, as testified by the fact that they comprise 85 percent of those in the Pelican Bay SHU.

In prison, the charge of "gang association" is all that's needed to end up in solitary. "Evidence" of such association includes everything from tattoos to greeting cards; written material, especially by or about black freedom fighters like Mumia Abu-Jamal or even classics like Machiavelli's *The Prince* and Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*; jailhouse lawyering and advocacy of prison reform. As Shane Bauer wrote: "In California, an inmate facing the worst punishment our penal system has to offer short of death can't even have a lawyer in the room. He can't gather or present evidence in his defense. He can't call witnesses. Much of the evidence—anything provided by informants—is confidential and thus impossible to refute."

While the maximum confinement in the SHU for killing a guard is five years, the length of stay for "gang association" is indeterminate. Outside of death, virtually the only other road out of the SHU is "debriefing," i.e., snitching out others as gang members. We demand an end to this Kafkaesque nightmare both inside and outside the prison walls from the anti-gang laws to solitary confinement! Decriminalize drugs and all other "crimes without victims," such as gambling, prostitution and pornography!

The Farce of Prison "Reform"

During the hunger strike, Attorney General Eric Holder called for an end to mandatory federal sentencing for "nonviolent" drug users. Many in the Republican Party establishment have also embraced such appeals. Overwhelmingly, the concern on all sides is the cost to the government, with prisons now grotesquely seen as some kind of new "welfare" for black people. Jerry Brown, though, isn't letting anyone go. According to the *L.A. Times* (22 August), the governor is now working on a plan with the California prison guard "union" and Corrections Corporation of America—the country's largest for-profit prison enterprise—to transfer prisoners to one of its jails in the Mojave Desert.

"It's a win-win," boasted an official of the prison guard association. Prisoners won't be released, and the guards will get more jobs policing the new facility. If there is any criminal gang in California's prisons, these sadistic screws are it. But they are embraced as "union brothers" by the sell-out labor misleaders. Having allowed the industrial and now public-sector unions to be savaged in the name of shared "sacrifice" while turning a blind eye to the destitution of the ghetto and barrio poor, the labor bureaucrats seek to maintain their dues base by organizing the strikebreaking cops and jailhouse thugs whose purpose is the violent suppression of the working class and oppressed. Cops and prison guards out of the unions!

The multiracial working class is the only force in capitalist society with both the social power and historic interest to eradicate a system rooted in exploitation. To unleash this power, there needs to be a political struggle to break the chains forged by the trade-union bureaucracy, which have shackled labor to its class enemy, particularly in its Democratic Party face. The purpose of the Spartacist League is to build the revolutionary party that will lead the workers in the fight to shatter the capitalist order. With the proletariat in power internationally, the vast wealth now appropriated by a tiny class of exploiters will instead provide the material basis for achieving an egalitarian communist society. The modern instruments of incarceration, torture and death will he placed alongside their medieval complements as relics of a decaying social order that deserved only to perish. ■

Young Spartacus

ROTC...

(continued from page 7)

"Ad-Hoc Committee Against the Militarization of CUNY" and called two protests this month against ROTC and General Petraeus. Given the RSCC's politics—as well as those of the IG, which chases almost any reformist tail to wherever it leads—it is no surprise that the Ad-Hoc Committee's 500-word manifesto ("CUNY Must Not Be a War College!" undated leaflet) manages the nearly impossible feat of failing to mention the Democratic Obama administration for which Petraeus worked, which is now overseeing the return of ROTC, and which is terrorizing the planet.

The fight against ROTC is part of a necessary fight for workers revolution to expropriate the capitalist class. We seek to join in concrete action with those who want to drive ROTC and Petraeus off campus, while always maintaining our separate political program and freedom of criticism. The SYCs, youth auxiliaries of the Spartacist League/U.S., section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), seek to break young workers and students from the ideological chains that bind them to illusions in capitalism and the warmongering Democratic Party. Young militants must study the lessons of history and understand that the world as it is today is not how it has always been, nor will always be. The capitalists may seem omnipotent today, but they are not so powerful as to prevent class struggle from breaking out. We stand for building a revolutionary Trotskyist party to lead a workers revolution that will replace today's dictatorship of the bourgeoisie with the dictatorship of the working class. ■

Workers Vanguard Readers Circle

Zimmerman Goes Free, Detroit Goes Under

Capitalist America: Racist Hell

This readers circle will be discussing the above article in *Workers Vanguard* No. 1028

NEW YORK CITY

Saturday, Sept. 7, 3 p.m.

299 Broadway, Suite 318
(Manhattan, 1½ blocks north of Chambers St.)
For info: (212) 267-1025 • nysl@tiac.net

Trotskyist League/Spartacus Youth League Forum

Karl Marx Was Right—Capitalist Barbarism and the Fight for Revolutionary Leadership

TORONTO

Saturday, Sept. 28, 7 p.m.

OISE (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education)
252 Bloor Street West, Room 5280
(at St George subway)
For info: (416) 593-4138 • spartcan@on.aibn.com

VANCOUVER

Saturday, Oct. 5, 2 p.m.

Roundhouse Community Centre
181 Roundhouse Mews
Multimedia Room
For info: (604) 687-0353
trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com

Spartacus Youth Club Events

BAY AREA

Thursday, September 19, 7 p.m.

Class Struggle and the Fight for Black Liberation

Rosa Parks D, Cesar Chavez Student Center, San Francisco State University
Information and readings:
(510) 839-0851 • sycbayarea@sbcglobal.net

CHICAGO

Thursday, September 12, 6 p.m.

The Struggle for Black Liberation: The Key to Socialist Revolution in America

222 S. Morgan (Buzzer 23)
Information and readings.
(312) 563-0441 • chicagosyc@sbcglobal.net

NEW YORK CITY

Wednesday, September 11, 7 p.m.

Meet the Marxists

CCNY, Room TBA
138th St. and Amsterdam Ave.
Information:
(212) 267-1025 • nysl@tiac.net

TORONTO

Wednesday, September 18, 6:30 p.m.

Introduction to the Marxist Worldview

U of T, Sidney Smith Hall, Room 2119
100 St. George Street
Information and readings:
(416) 593-4138
spartcan@on.aibn.com

VANCOUVER

Wednesday, September 11, 6:30 p.m.

Scientific Socialism vs. Idealism and Religion

The Dialectical Materialist Universe

UBC, Irving Barber Learning Centre Room 460
Information and readings:
(604) 687-0353
trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Hunger Strike Against the Torture of Solitary

California Prison Hell

In early July, some 30,000 California prisoners launched their third hunger strike in two years against the barbaric torture of solitary confinement. At its peak, the strike encompassed two-thirds of the 33 state prisons and all four private out-of-state prisons that hold California inmates, making it five times the size of the strikes in 2011. Prison officials retaliated by blasting freezing air into the cells of hunger strikers and by denying them vitamins and any liquids except water for 18 days. In an *L.A. Times* (6 August) op-ed column titled "Hunger Strike in California Prisons is a Gang Power Play," the head of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), Jeffrey Beard, ranted that the men starving themselves to put an end to the depravity of solitary did so "to advance their own agenda of violence."

With some 123 prisoners continuing to hold out eight weeks into the strike, a federal court judge ruled that prison doctors can force feed the remaining hunger strikers. A spokesman for the federal receiver in charge of prison medical care celebrated the court order as clearing the way to "save their lives"! Although prisoners had signed "do not resuscitate" directives, the Dr. Mengeles of the CDCR are preparing to "save" them for the torments of the Security Housing Unit's (SHU) isolation chambers.

Welcome to Guantánamo North, where the systematic brutality is of a piece with the unspeakable sadism of the U.S. jailers abroad. With 25 percent of the prison population on the planet, the U.S. leads the world in the number of people—disproportionately black and Latino—it throws behind bars. And California leads the nation. Like Dante's *Inferno*, the Italian poet's 14th-century epic portrayal of a journey through the nine concentric circles of hell, California's prison "Inferno" is a journey through concentric circles of increasing barbarism. Located far from inmates' families and enclosed by lethal electric fences, "supermax" lockups like Pelican Bay State Prison contain the high-tech sensory deprivation chambers of the SHU.

Entombed behind heavy metal doors in windowless, ten-by-eight foot concrete cages for more than 22 hours a day, prisoners have no human contact other than with guards. Conditions in the SHU were powerfully captured by Shane Bauer, one of three Americans seized by the Iranian government and held incommunicado in the notorious isolation ward for political prisoners at Iran's Envin prison. In a *Mother Jones* (November-December 2012) article titled "Solitary in Iran Nearly Broke Me. Then I Went Inside America's Prisons," Bauer describes visiting the Pelican Bay SHU, where his guide wants to know if it is different from Iran. Bauer wonders if he should "point out that I had a mattress, and they have thin pieces of foam; that the concrete open-air cell I exercised in was twice the size of the 'dog run' at Pelican Bay...; that I got 15 minutes of phone calls in 26 months and they get none." Instead, he simply opts to reply that he had "a window." The sunlight, fresh air and sounds of the outside world it afforded kept him from breaking. But in the Pelican Bay SHU "there are no windows."

Photo filed in U.S. District Court briefings

Above: Inmates from solitary await group therapy in "treatment cages" at Mule Creek State Prison, California. Below: Protest outside Department of Corrections office in solidarity with hunger strike, Sacramento, July 2013.

Reuters

As far back as 1890, the Supreme Court condemned solitary as an "infamous punishment" that drove prisoners "violently insane." Today prison authorities simply deny that the SHU is solitary. Unspeakably cruel, the conditions in California's prisons are not an aberration in racist America. On the contrary, such barbarism is the product of a capitalist system that is in a state of advanced decay.

As we wrote in "Hunger Strike in California Prison Hell" (*WV* No. 984, 5 August 2011):

> "High-tech sensory deprivation chambers like the SHU throw into stark relief the nature of the bourgeois state as an apparatus of organized violence to preserve the rule and profits of racist American capitalism.
>
> "The prisons are the concentrated expression of the depravity of this society, a key instrument in coercing, torturing and brutalizing those who have been cast off as the useless residue of a system rooted in exploitation and racial oppression. Elementary humanity demands that the SHU and all other solitary confinement chambers be abolished. But it will take nothing short of proletarian socialist revolution to destroy the capitalists' prison system and sweep away all the barbaric institutions of the bourgeois state."

California Prisons: "The Worst of the Worst"

Even in the dungeon empire of "incarceration nation," California prisons are among the worst of the worst. Conditions are so atrocious that the most reactionary Supreme Court in 60 years found them in violation of the Eighth Amendment's ban on "cruel and unusual punishment." A 2011 majority opinion recounted that California's "prisons had operated at around 200% of design capacity for at least 11 years" during which "needless suffering and death have been the well documented result." The court mandated that California cut its prison population to 137 percent capacity. For nearly three decades, lower courts had directed the state to relieve overcrowding, provide medical care and stop abuse by prison guards.

In the two years since the Supreme Court ruling, California's Democratic Party governor Jerry Brown has openly flouted orders to release 9,600 prisoners. In April, a three-judge panel threatened to hold the governor in contempt of court for defying orders to provide adequate medical treatment, particularly for thousands of mentally ill prisoners who often find themselves locked in single holding cells awaiting "group therapy." Brown defiantly retorted that his jailhouses provided "among the best healthcare in America and probably the world."

Following this ringing endorsement, an outbreak of coccidioidomycosis, or Valley Fever, at two San Joaquin Valley prisons impelled a federal judge to grant a class-action suit by seven inmates and order the state to relocate around 2,600 prisoners to other facilities. For years, the state has opposed any such move, arguing that it could cause race riots, an open admission that segregation reigns in California prisons. Blacks, Filipinos and people with compromised immune systems are at high risk for Valley Fever, a disease that can be fatal if left untreated. In the past three years alone, close to 2,000 inmates at the two prisons have contracted the disease and in the past seven years 40 have died from it.

As the suit argued, the state's refusal to transfer prisoners from the Valley "was the equivalent of conducting a human medical experiment on the inmates, without their consent. For an unacceptable percentage of inmates, including the plaintiff subclasses identified here, assignment to these facilities is a potential death sentence." Here is recalled the infamous "Tuskegee experiment," in which from 1932 to 1972 public health officials denied lifesaving penicillin to 600 black men in Alabama afflicted with syphilis.

There was, however, one medical treatment readily available in California's prisons: forcible sterilization. From 2006 to 2010, at least 148 women inmates were coerced into undergoing tubal ligations in a throwback to the genocidal pseudoscience of eugenics. Between 1909 and 1964, California sanctioned 20,000 such operations on patients in state-run facilities under a law authorizing the sterilization of the "feebleminded," the "diseased" and the "perverted." This law was only repealed in 1979. But its motivation remains. When questioned about the $147,460 price tag for sterilization, one ob-gyn opined: "That isn't a huge amount of money compared to what you save in welfare paying for these unwanted children—as they procreated more."

The Criminalization of Black and Latino Youth

Mumia Abu-Jamal, America's foremost class-war prisoner, knows solitary from the inside. An innocent man, this former Black Panther spent 30 years on death row in Pennsylvania on frame-up charges of killing a cop until he was released into the general prison population last year. In his "Sept. 14th Statement on Solitary" from a year ago, Mumia wrote:

> "Is it cruel and unusual and thus violative of the Eighth Amendment to the U.S. constitution? Apparently this was so in the 1890s but not so in the present, probably because of who was in prison then—and who are now.
>
> "It may surprise you to know that all the

continued on page 11

WORKERS VANGUARD 50¢

No. 1030 20 September 2013

U.S. Hands Off the World!

Imperialists Put Off Strike on Syria, For Now

Reuters

Barack Obama with Russian president Vladimir Putin during G20 summit in St. Petersburg, Russia, September 5.

Many throughout the world—from various European heads of state to the average Joe/Jill on the streets of the U.S.—breathed a sigh of relief when Barack Obama announced that he was tabling his plans to bomb Syria while exploring Russian President Vladimir Putin's proposal to place the Assad regime's stockpile of chemical weapons under "international control." Soon after, Obama's media toadies were fuming over the trenchant and apt delineation of U.S. bellicosity in Putin's op-ed piece in the *New York Times* (11 September). Pointing out that a U.S. strike against Syria would "result in more innocent victims and escalation," the capitalist autocrat wrote: "Millions around the world increasingly see America not as a model of democracy but as relying solely on brute force, cobbling coalitions together under the slogan 'you're either with us or against us'." He then piously put forward, "We must stop using the language of force and return to the path of civilized diplomatic and political settlement."

It is a measure of the intense opposition to a U.S. attack on Syria that Putin has been mentioned, at times without tongue in cheek, for the Nobel Peace Prize given to war criminals who, however briefly, resort to diplomatic wheeling and dealing. Meanwhile, calls on Obama to forfeit his prize have been on the increase. Putin's posture as the epitome of moderation and reason is consummate hypocrisy from the strongman of capitalist Russia who led the carnage against Chechen fighters for independence over a decade ago, among other bloody deeds.

The current chaos and bloodletting in the Near East, which in the context of the Syrian civil war threaten to erupt into a regional Sunni-versus-Shi'ite communal war, have been fed by more than two decades of wars and machinations by U.S. imperialism in the service of its appetites to maintain and augment its dominance there. U.S. depredations have decimated the populations of Iraq and Afghanistan and are ongoing both in Afghanistan and with drone strikes throughout the region. Although the talks between Secretary of State John Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov seem to have removed the prospect of an attack on Syria in the near future, Obama has maintained his "right" to act unilaterally if he is not pleased with the outcome of the chemical weapons deal.

The Assad regime lauds Putin for obtaining an agreement it describes as a victory. The Syrian rebels, on the other hand, had hoped that the campaign against the purported use of chemical weapons would provide the basis for imperialist bombardment on their behalf and have bitterly denounced the agreement. Marxists do not support either side in the Syrian civil war, which pits two reactionary forces against each other: the butcher Assad regime and a gaggle of rebel forces, ranging from hardcore Islamists to some secular types, which are mainly armed by Persian Gulf states and have themselves reportedly used chemical weapons. However, it would be the duty of the proletariat, especially U.S. workers in the belly of the beast, to stand for the defense of Syria against any military attack by the rapacious imperialists. Workers must also oppose the imperialist starvation sanctions that are in place against both Syria and Iran.

AFP

New York Times video

Above: Aftermath of reported air strikes by Syrian air force in Idlib Province, September 5. Below: Imperialist-backed rebels execute seven Syrian army soldiers, Spring 2012.

The Assad regime, which amassed chemical weapons as a counterweight to the nuclear-armed Zionist state of Israel, has indicated willingness to accept the terms of the Russia-U.S. deal, including the presence of United Nations chemical weapons inspectors. It is to be remembered that in the lead-up to the second U.S. war against Iraq, the UN and its inspectors acted as the imperialists' facilitators, a role the UN has played since its founding after World War II. As the world's dominant capitalist power, the U.S. will persist in its efforts to control the Near East politically and militarily. As aptly put by John Pilger in the London *Guardian* (10 September): "John Kerry's farce and Barack Obama's pirouettes are temporary. Russia's peace deal over chemical weapons will, in time, be treated with the contempt that all militarists reserve for diplomacy."

In Syria as well as Iran, Russia has strategic interests in the production and delivery of fossil fuels throughout the region. Moreover, Russia has enough military might, largely in the form of its nuclear arsenal, to command the respect of the U.S. To emphasize its opposition to Obama's threatened bombing, Russia dispatched two warships to the Mediterranean Sea in August and recently sent two more to the area, including a "carrier killer" missile cruiser. The CIA has in recent weeks initiated light arms and munitions shipments to Syrian rebels, who are likely to receive more such aid in spite of the deal.

In the countries of the European Union (EU), many of which remain mired in recession, the widespread unpopularity of the U.S.-led war/occupation of Iraq provided the main basis for large-scale opposition to the proposed attack on Syria. British Conservative prime minister David Cameron's failure to deliver parliamentary support for an attack left François Hollande, Socialist Party prime minister of France (Syria's former colonial overlord), as the only EU leader to back the U.S. Russian resistance to the U.S. bombing plans stiffened the resolve of the European imperialist chiefs, whose countries have their own interests in the region. When the assassin Putin provided Edward Snowden with temporary asylum, thus seizing the tattered mantle of "human rights" respectability from the assassin Obama, those heads of state were further pleased. All of these run their own nations' spy apparatuses (normally in collaboration with the NSA and CIA or, in Britain's case, in lockstep). But many of them resent the mammoth scope of the surveillance they are subjected to by the U.S. spymasters.

The rapidity with which the U.S./Russian understanding was reached indicates that Obama had little taste to go it alone. His September 10 speech indicating a willingness to try the path of diplomacy was for the most part a paean to American imperialism as the seven-decade-long "anchor of global security"—in other words, the world's sheriff. Through multiple enforcements (read, continuous wars), America has

continued on page 7

Rulers Fuel Deadly Witchhunt

State-Branded "Sex Offenders": Pariahs for Life...4

Greek Left, Immigrants in Fascists' Crosshairs

ATHENS—In a small but important victory for the left and all opponents of the fascist Golden Dawn, the Secretary General of the Workers Revolutionary Party (EEK), Savvas Michael Matsas, and the former rector of the National Technical University of Athens, Konstantinos Moutzouris, were acquitted on September 4 of all charges that resulted from a lawsuit by Golden Dawn. Michael was targeted because he is a leftist and Jewish. He was falsely accused of defamation against Golden Dawn because the May 2009 issue of the EEK's journal, *New Perspective*, characterized them as a Nazi organization that incites racist attacks against immigrants. He was also charged with "disturbance of the civil peace" and "incitement of violent assaults and conflict." Moutzouris was accused of allowing the independent news portal Indymedia to use university servers.

Following several anti-fascist demonstrations in early 2009 in defense of immigrants, Golden Dawn filed a lawsuit against numerous parties and individuals, such as the Communist Party of Greece (KKE), Syriza and the left coalition Antarsya, as well as immigrant organizations. In total, they named 80 people. Three years later, police conducted interrogations and Moutzouris and Michael were singled out for prosecution. This transparent political witchhunt gained international attention, including an article in the London *Guardian* (1 September) by Maria Margaronis. After a two-day trial during which the prosecution's two main witnesses from Golden Dawn did not even appear, Michael and Moutzouris were acquitted of all charges.

In an August 27 statement demanding that the charges against Michael and Moutzouris be dropped, the Trotskyist Group of Greece explained:

> "This case has also fueled a climate in which a vile online anti-Semitic campaign has been whipped up against Savvas Michael with calls to 'hit the Jewish vermin' and describing him as 'an instrument of the World Jewish Conspiracy to foment civil war among Greeks to impose a Judeo-Bolshevik regime in Greece' ('Resolution of Solidarity' at www.change.org/petitions). The savage attacks by the Greek capitalists and by the imperialist EU [European Union] against Greek working people over the past five years have led to many protests and struggles by the working class and the left. At the same time attacks on the left are increasing while nationalism, anti-immigrant racism and hostility to anything not considered 'pure Greek' are on the rise. It is in this context that Savvas Michael and Konstantinos Moutzouris are facing charges."

Indeed, while the acquittal of Michael and Moutzouris was a victory, on September 12 supporters of the KKE postering in a working-class district near the port of Piraeus were brutally attacked by 50 men with crowbars and bats. Reporting on a KKE protest, the *Guardian* (13 September) Web site described the assault as "a violent attack on Communist party members by black-shirted supporters of the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party which left nine people in hospital with serious injuries" ("Greeks Protest Against Golden Dawn Attack on Communists"). The incident took place in Perama, where the KKE has a historic base among shipyard workers. According to the KKE newspaper *Rizaspastis* (14 September), one of the victims sent to the hospital by this potentially deadly attack was the president of the Union of Metalworkers of Piraeus.

This attack underscores the TGG's warning: "While Golden Dawn currently aim their attacks primarily against immigrants, gays and leftists, their ultimate purpose is to crush the organizations of the working class in order to save the capitalists, as Mussolini's forces did in Italy in the 1920s and Hitler's in Germany in the 1930s" ("Capitalists Bleed Greek Working Class," *WV* No. 1013, 23 November 2012). The Greek bourgeoisie has a long history of resorting to right-wing terror to smash the workers movement. The current attacks pose the urgent need to mobilize contingents of workers, based on the trade unions, to sweep the fascists off the streets.

It is a condemnation of the existing workers' leadership that the power of organized labor has so far not been brought to bear in this struggle, even as the fascists have gained strength in the climate of mass unemployment and grinding austerity. Last year, after a Golden Dawn thug attacked a female KKE parliamentary deputy on live television, then-KKE general secretary Aleka Papariga ruled out mobilizations to stop Golden Dawn's attacks, fatuously declaring that they would be defeated by "the weapon of the vote" (kke.gr, 7 June 2012). No! What is necessary to beat back the fascist menace are mass, proletarian united-front mobilizations against the fascists, drawing in all their intended victims.

Violent attacks, along with prosecutions of workers and leftists, are nothing other than attempts to intimidate anti-fascists into silence and passivity. Another chilling witchhunt is being carried out against hospital workers on the island of Samos who are facing investigation for refusing to collect blood from Golden Dawn donors who insisted it be for "Greeks only." An August 29 press release by the Panhellenic Federation of Public Hospital Workers defending the Samos workers states: "The state has the obligation to provide as a social benefit FREE and EQUAL healthcare to the residents of the country independently of nationality and race." It is telling that in June the government chose Adonis Georgiadis, a former leader of the fascist-infested LAOS party, as Health Minister to oversee the destruction of what remains of Greece's public health system and its workforce.

Capitalism gives birth to the scourge of fascism, so the struggle to do away with forces like Golden Dawn must be linked to the fight for the overthrow of capitalist rule in Greece and internationally. The EU's austerity attacks, led centrally by German imperialism, have helped fuel not only massive protest but also a resurgence of chauvinist nationalism among Greeks. In opposition to the nationalist politics promoted by the Greek left, we understand that the fight for international socialist revolution and a Socialist United States of Europe is key to leading the Greek working class out of its desperate situation. For this it is necessary to build a revolutionary workers party—a party like Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks—which champions the interests of all the exploited and the oppressed as part of the fight for a workers government. The TGG, sympathizing section of the International Communist League, seeks to build such a party. ■

TROTSKY

LENIN

Fascism and Capitalist Crisis

Feeding off af the grinding capitalist ecanamic crisis in Greece, the fascist Golden Dawn has launched a series af attacks on immigrants, left organizations and trade unionists. The dire threat that fascism pases for the working class and the oppressed was explained by Leon Trotsky in 1932 as part of his call for proletarian united-front mobilizations ta stop the Nazis in their tracks—a program that retains full validity and urgency today in Greece and elsewhere.

For the monopolistic bourgeoisie, the parliamentary and fascist regimes represent only different vehicles of dominion; it has recourse to one or the other, depending upon the historical conditions....

At the moment that the "normal" police and military resources of the bourgeois dictatorship, together with their parliamentary screens, no longer suffice to hold society in a state of equilibrium—the turn of the fascist regime arrives. Through the fascist agency, capitalism sets in motion the masses of the crazed petty bourgeoisie, and bands of the declassed and demoralized lumpenproletariat; all the countless human beings whom finance capital itself has brought to desperation and frenzy. From fascism the bourgeoisie demands a thorough job; once it has resorted to methods of civil war, it insists on having peace for a period of years. And the fascist agency, by utilizing the petty bourgeoisie as a battering ram, by overwhelming all obstacles in its path, does a thorough job. After fascism is victorious, finance capital gathers into its hands, as in a vise of steel, directly and immediately, all the organs and institutions of sovereignty, the executive, administrative, and educational powers of the state: the entire state apparatus together with the army, the municipalities, the universities, the schools, the press, the trade unions, and the cooperatives. When a state turns fascist, it doesn't only mean that the forms and methods of government are changed in accordance with the patterns set by Mussolini—the changes in this sphere ultimately play a minor role—but it means, primarily and above all, that the workers' organizations are annihilated; that the proletariat is reduced to an amorphous state; and that a system of administration is created which penetrates deeply into the masses and which serves to frustrate the independent crystallization of the proletariat. Therein precisely is the gist of fascism.

—Leon Trotsky, "What Next? Vital Questions for the German Proletariat"
(27 January 1932), printed in *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany*
(Pathfinder, 1971)

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.

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The closing date for news in this issue is September 17

No. 1030 **20 September 2013**

Spartacist League/SYC Forum

U.S. Get Your Bloody Hands Off the World!

Capitalist Surveillance State Targets Everyone

NEW YORK CITY **Saturday, October 5, 3 p.m.**

322 West 48th Street, 1st Floor
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For info: (212) 267-1025 • nysl@tiac.net

Trotskyist League of Canada/SYC Forum

Capitalist Barbarism and the Fight for Revolutionary Leadership

Karl Marx Was Right

MONTREAL
Saturday, September 21
2 p.m.
Presentation in French
Centre St-Pierre, Salle 202, 1212 rue Panet
(métro Beaudry)
For info: (514) 728-7578 • trotskyste.montreal@gmail.com

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Saturday, September 28
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OISE (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education)
252 Bloor Street West, Room 5280
(at St. George subway)
For info: (416) 593-4138 • spartcan@on.aibn.com

VANCOUVER
Saturday, October 5
2 p.m.
Roundhouse Community Centre
181 Roundhouse Mews, Multimedia Room
For info: (604) 687-0353
trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com

Brooklyn Hospital Crisis

Union Jobs, Services for Poor Under the Ax

For a snapshot of the irrationality and anarchy of the capitalist system one need look no further than to the current crisis plaguing hospitals in the New York City borough of Brooklyn. With a string of hospitals facing bankruptcy and their owners threatening to shut them down, medical services are under severe attack. Today, at least four Brooklyn hospitals—a quarter of the borough's total—are threatened with closure. That could eliminate more than 2,000 hospital beds and greatly reduce access to emergency rooms. This wholesale slashing of health care services would overwhelmingly hit working people and especially black people, Latinos and other minorities. Thousands of union jobs are under threat.

EPA

Demonstrators march across Brooklyn Bridge to protest threatened closure of Long Island College Hospital, July 24.

Starving ghetto hospitals of public funds and forcing closures is as New York as stop-and-frisk. In the past seven years, fully 18 hospitals in New York State have shut down, including 12 in New York City. With the economic crisis that was touched off in 2008 and the recent cutbacks in Medicaid payments, more Brooklyn hospitals are facing bankruptcy. Those hospitals, whose patients include a high proportion of the poor and elderly, are especially vulnerable to cuts in Medicaid and Medicare reimbursement rates. One million Brooklynites, almost 40 percent of the borough's population, are registered in the state Medicaid program. Additionally, as is true throughout the New York metropolitan area, those with commercial insurance are increasingly seeking medical care in Manhattan.

The Brooklyn hospital crisis is ground zero in a mounting wave of hospital closings and mergers nationally. This has been intensified by the impending implementation of President Obama's Affordable Care Act (ACA), which comes with drastic cuts in the rates of Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement that hospitals will receive. The Act explicitly maintains the bar against undocumented immigrants receiving Medicaid. The ACA will also hit unionized workers in a number of ways, including by taxing so-called "Cadillac" health plans. We opposed the ACA from the start, pointing out that it was a "reform" Wall Street could believe in. While fighting tooth and nail against hospital closures and cutbacks, the health care unions should take the lead in the struggle for free, quality health care for everyone, including all immigrants. Such a fight would speak to the felt needs of millions and help revitalize the labor movement.

Bipartisan War on Health Care

Despite their misleading designation as "nonprofit" institutions, privately owned hospitals in New York State are, no less than their "for profit" counterparts elsewhere, subject to the laws of the capitalist market. If they cannot generate enough revenue to cover their expenses—that is, if they are not profitable—they will ultimately go under. And failing hospitals are not likely to see the kind of generous subsidies that Washington handed out to the banks and auto companies. In the eyes of the bourgeoisie, government expenditure on health care for the sick and elderly is an overhead expense that ultimately lowers the overall profit rate.

Democratic New York governor Andrew Cuomo has made it clear he will balance the budget on the backs of the workers and there will be no bailouts. Cuomo is intent on slashing $500 million in Medicaid funding, which would overwhelmingly hit the most needy and vulnerable, and on imposing massive cutbacks in personal care and other services for the disabled. He is also cracking down on "preventable" hospital admissions for drug-addicted and mentally ill patients.

Cuomo's plan was based on the recommendations of the governor's Medicaid Redesign Team (MRT), which specifically called for the elimination of 1,235 beds from Brooklyn hospitals. The MRT included George Gresham, president of the health care union 1199 SEIU, and was co-chaired by his predecessor as union head, Dennis Rivera. For years, the 1199 leadership traded on its "progressive" image as a defender of liberal social causes. All the while, the 1199 bureaucrats served to tie their working-class base to the capitalist Democratic Party, including by themselves serving as key party officials and operatives. Indeed, Rivera served as Obama's point man in preparing the ground for the ACA by helping to forge a coalition of insurance and drug companies, along with the American Medical Association and the American Hospital Association and their lobbyists, that determined the bill's contours.

Local 1199 SEIU and the New York State Nurses Association (NYSNA) along with smaller unions have rallied, lobbied, prayed, chanted and sent petitions to the state government in Albany in opposition to hospital closures. The union tops have also relied heavily on legal action in the courts to put speed bumps in the way of the closures. There have been many small demonstrations against the threatened Brooklyn closings, which the 1199 and NYSNA leaderships have used to promote Democratic candidate Bill de Blasio as the next mayor.

De Blasio has made the Brooklyn hospitals a key part of his mayoral campaign. He was arrested outside the offices of the SUNY University Hospital and appeared at many demonstrations, while also filing countless legal papers. In his capacity as New York City Public Advocate, he called for setting up a "super-authority" with "extraordinary powers" to oversee Brooklyn hospital restructuring—a body that would contain the same city and state officials who are overseeing and approving the closures right now. De Blasio holds Montefiore Hospital in the Bronx as a model for providing hospital services in a high Medicaid area. Montefiore has been buying up smaller hospitals and other facilities and in the process *laying off workers*.

By promoting de Blasio's candidacy, the 1199 bureaucrats promote the lie that the interests of workers and the poor are represented by those capitalist politicians who strike a pose as friends of labor. No less than the Republicans, the Democrats are a party of the capitalist class, as illustrated by the fact that Cuomo's attacks on health care largely echo the program laid out by his Republican predecessor, George Pataki. We say *no vote to de Blasio* or any other Democratic Party politician. The working class needs its own party: a workers party that fights for a workers government, which would expropriate the productive wealth of the capitalist class—including the health care industry—and build and develop a planned economy in which production is geared toward social need, not profit.

For a Class-Struggle Fight Against Hospital Closings

The next Brooklyn hospital on the chopping block is Interfaith Medical Center,

continued on page 7

CORRECTION

In the article "Greek Workers Battle Austerity, State Repression" (*WV* No. 1017, 8 February), we polemicized against the Greek Socialist Workers Party (SEK) for an article called "Patriotism and Internationalism" that appeared in their press (*Workers Solidarity*, 9 January). This was in fact a letter that the SEK published without comment.

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Rulers Fuel Deadly Witchhunt
State-Branded "Sex Offenders": Pariahs for Life

Convicted "sex offender" forced to live in camp under bridge in Miami, February 2008. Reuters

Over the past several decades, the sex police in this country have swept up some one million people. They are thrown in prison, publicly humiliated and endangered by Internet "sex offender" registries, tracked by GPS ankle shackles, hounded out of their communities, driven to live under bridges and in the woods. They are turned into total social outcasts, modern-day lepers.

Even as gay marriage—and (openly) gay Boy Scouts—find wider acceptance, the capitalist rulers' effort to legislate sex and "morality" is a seemingly endless project. Its latest expression is the frenzy whipped up against an alleged rash of incorrigible "sexual predators," especially those supposedly targeting children over the Internet (i.e., fantasyland) and via pornography (again, pure fantasy). There is no such epidemic, although there do seem to be an awful lot of undercover cops lurking in chat rooms. Untold thousands have been victimized just for viewing porn or trying to communicate with others, not to mention engaging in consensual sex with minors—none of which would be crimes in a rational society.

As with the hysteria in the 1980s and '90s over supposed satanic child-molestation rings in daycare centers, the Internet predator is a government- and media-manufactured myth. Bolstering and manipulating fear and backward social attitudes, its underlying purpose is to legitimize and strengthen the powers of the capitalist state. While Democratic and Republican politicians prate about "protecting our children," the U.S. imperialists bomb children across the globe even as millions go hungry in this country, where the infant mortality rate ranks 51st in the world.

Some of the more pernicious legal innovations, designed to further government control, are the federal laws signed by Democratic president Bill Clinton in the mid 1990s that require online registration and community notification of the whereabouts of released sex offenders. A further statute requires state law enforcement authorities to transmit their data and fingerprints to the FBI for a national database. There also is "civil commitment," which is used to keep prisoners institutionalized after their sentences are served. With these laws, people convicted of sex crimes are plunged into a Kafkaesque labyrinth of presumed guilt, social ostracism, preemptive punishment, fear and violence—usually for life.

For Charles Parker of Jonesville, South Carolina, and his wife, his registration as a sex offender was a death sentence. In July, Jeremy Moody plucked Parker's name off the registration list that located the Parker home on a map, walked in and shot and stabbed the couple, "I'm not here to rob you, I'm here to kill you because you're a child molester," said Moody, who has the word "skinhead" tattooed across his neck. (Parker had not been convicted of child molestation.) Moody later admitted that he was preparing to kill another person off the registry.

Case Study: The Friedmans

Recently back in the news was the case of Arnold Friedman and his teenage son Jesse, which was documented in the chilling, Oscar-nominated 2003 film *Capturing the Friedmans*. The film shows how the two Long Island men, victims of police misconduct, community hysteria and judicial bias, were coerced into falsely confessing to dozens of counts of child abuse that supposedly occurred in Arnold's computer classes, where Jesse assisted him. A teenage friend of Jesse s, Ross Goldstein, was also convicted and served 13 months in jail after he was coerced to confess and make false accusations against Jesse.

The charges in this witchhunt ranged from the outlandish to the impossible. As Jesse Friedman pointed out, one ten-year-old boy who attended class once a week alleged that he was forced to have anal or oral sex 30 times in a ten-week period and—after re-enrolling—was raped 41 times in class the next year. One charge described group molestation exercises, including "Leap Frog," in which Arnold and Jesse supposedly sodomized an entire class of naked boys by leaping from one to the next. Despite tales of physical violence, verbal abuse and forced sex in front of the whole class, not one bit of evidence was mustered—no bruises or bloody clothes. No parents voiced a murmur of suspicion until the cops arrived at their doorstep to interview their kids.

The only indisputable fact is that in 1987 customs agents intercepted a packet containing child pornography addressed to Arnold Friedman, leading to a police raid on the Friedman home in the affluent Great Neck suburb of New York. There, police seized perhaps 20 kiddie porn magazines from around the house and a list of children who attended Arnold's classes.

In possessing pornography, Arnold Friedman committed no crime! Pictures, fantasy sex, entertainment: porn hurts no one. How many of us could avoid prison if we stood to be jailed for our "deviant thoughts"? As opposed to some feminists and the Maoists of the Revolutionary Communist Party who want to clamp down on porn on the specious grounds that it causes violence against women, we recognize that anti-porn laws hurt everyone by legitimizing censorship and unleashing state interference in private lives. We oppose anti-porn laws and all laws against "crimes without victims," such as prostitution, drugs, gambling. The government should keep its eyes, ears and nose out of the bedroom and out of people's private lives!

Meyer/SF Chronicle

In accord with the twisted logic promoted in this society that Arnold Friedman, viewer of pornography, must therefore also have been a child molester, he was sentenced to 10-30 years and died in jail in 1995, an apparent suicide. Jesse got six to 18 years behind bars. He was released in 2001 after 13 years, only to face a life sentence of legal and societal persecution.

Even before the trial began, authorities promoted the view that every one of Arnold's students should be considered a victim. Hundreds of hysterical parents massed in community meetings demanding advice on how to counsel their children. They were told to seek therapy. Many supposed victims in such cases have testified years later to the vast harm done to them and their families by the state's coercing them to invent stories and by the subsequent "therapy" premised on these fairy tales.

This year, the same prosecutor's office that convicted the Friedmans reviewed the case in response to a searing critique by the U.S. Second Circuit Court of Appeals in 2010. The court wrote: "The record here suggests 'a reasonable likelihood' that Jesse Friedman was wrongfully convicted." For the prosecutor's review, Ross Goldstein (known as Kenneth Doe in the legal papers) spoke up for the first time in 23 years. In a nine-page statement to the district attorney, he stated: "None of the events allegedly described by or attributed

to Kenneth Doe ever took place." Goldstein joined numerous former students who now affirm that absolutely nothing happened in the classes and that police intimidated them into providing false statements. Nonetheless (and not surprisingly), the result of the self-examination was that the prosecutor's office acquitted itself of any procedural wrongdoing.

Childhood Sexuality and the State

The Friedman case, an ongoing tragedy for an entire family, highlights several important political issues. The Spartacist League's approach, derived from our Marxist worldview, puts us at odds with bourgeois moralism and often also with many self-styled socialist groups. Human sexuality is broad-gauged, but its practice is conditioned by the particular society. U.S. bourgeois society, with its fanatical religious component, pours a good deal of energy into restraining sexual appetites in the name of social order. With its cops, judges and prisons, the state's intervention into private sexual relations is aimed at imposing the morality professed by the bourgeoisie, and it often transforms a harmless or even positive experience into a nightmare. The bourgeois state is not a neutral arbiter or protector of the whole citizenry; it exists to assure the maintenance of capitalist rule.

A premise of many anti-sex laws is that children are asexual beings. Absurdly, adolescents and teenagers with raging hormones are considered children. In fact, sexuality is part of the makeup of humans from infancy. As extensively covered in "Unholy Alliance of Feminists and Christian Right—Satan, the State and Anti-Sex Hysteria" (*Women and Revolution* No. 45, Winter-Spring 1996), children are inquisitive little animals who engage in sexual and other types of experimentation and observation on their way into adulthood. As among other primate species, sex among humans has a large learning component. Today, in much of the country ready access to contraception and sex education is routinely denied, leaving youth vulnerable to unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. If they try to act on what they see on TV and the Internet, they're in trouble.

Statutory rape laws vary widely from state to state, but they all criminalize activity deemed sexual by the court simply on the grounds that a minor (someone below the "age of consent") was involved, regardless of whether or not whatever happened was consensual. The law willfully conflates consensual sex with violent sexual assault and rape. *Anyone* convicted of having sex, or of something considered sexual contact, with a minor is automatically labeled a violent offender. The designation "predatory" can be given when a court decides that a relationship had been established or promoted for the primary purpose of "victimization."

The only guideline for any sexual relationship should be that of effective consent—that is, mutual understanding by the parties involved—regardless of age, gender or sexual preference. Granted, making the most basic determinations, e.g., whether anything really happened and whether it was consensual, can sometimes be tricky. And there are certainly plenty of cases of violent abuse and rape for which victims might seek legal recourse. At the same time, as Irish playwright Brendan Behan once commented in a different context, "I have never seen a situation so dismal that a policeman couldn't make it worse." Furthermore, disentangling issues of human sexuality from the web of social prejudice is almost impossible in this class- and race-divided society. Freed of the cruelty and cold indifference arising from the profit drive, a socialist society would strive for a scientific approach to these knotty questions.

Lock 'Em Up...

The anti-sex laws have created a huge mass of potential targets, fueling dragnets with huge cash outlays for undercover work and encouraging frame-up trials using sketchy psychiatric constructs and "expert witnesses." As a result, ever more victims have been shoveled into the maw of the U.S. prison system, already the largest in the world. The toll of the war on sexual "deviants" has added to the earlier "war on crime" and ongoing "war on drugs"—code words for racist legal persecution that quadrupled the prison population to some 2.2 million people today, nearly half of them black.

From the 1970s to now, the number of people locked up as sex offenders has mushroomed. *Sex Panic and the Punitive State* (University of California Press, 2011) by Roger N. Lancaster provides a useful survey, describing the development of such panics and delineating just how vast the archipelago of victims of state sex persecution is. Lancaster wrote: "Nationally, reports of child sex abuse leaped from 6,000 in 1976 to 113,000 in 1985 and 350,000 in 1988—a fifty-eight-fold increase in twelve years." Pointing to an irrational dread of "the lurking stranger," he noted in a *New York Times* (20 August 2011) article titled "Sex Offenders: The Last Pariahs": "A child's risk of being killed by a sexual predator who is a stranger is comparable to the chance of being struck by lightning." Lancaster also made the point that "most perpetrators of sexual abuse are family members, close relatives, or friends or acquaintances of the victim's family."

The anti-sex witchhunts have been used to trash basic tenets that Americans are taught to believe are inherent to a democracy, similar to how the "war on terror" has eviscerated a range of constitutional rights. As seen in the Friedman case, privacy is the first to go, then presumption of innocence as the accused are demonized. The convicted are then marked for the rest of their lives. Nearly 750,000 people are currently on the Web registry mandated by the Clinton-era "Megan's Law," which was enacted after seven-year-old Megan Kanka was brutally murdered in a sexual assault in 1994.

Upon release from prison, Jesse Friedman—who did not do anything to begin with—was categorized as a "level III violent sexual predator," that is, deemed to pose a high risk of repeat offense and a threat to public safety. As such, he was driven out of his home three times. He wrote on his Web site regarding residency restrictions that prohibit proximity to children: "If you look at a map you will discover that means almost everywhere. In some states and cities I would be banned from any place 'where children are known to congregate' that includes libraries, museums, aquariums, beaches, and even public sporting events." "Megan's Law," he wrote, "is social exile."

Thousands of others have similarly been made into pariahs. In Southampton, a summer playground for New York City socialites and Wall Street sharks, some 40 men convicted of various sex offenses are forced to live in two trailers located away from population centers. Only one trailer has a shower—"offenders" in the other trailer have to take a bus there to bathe a couple times a week.

Lost Memory of Skin (HarperCollins, 2011), a starkly realistic novel by Russell Banks, explores the horrifying world of the new outcasts. The hero is a shy and naive young man referred to as "the Kid" whose faithful companion and only friend is his iguana Iggy. The Kid goes to meet "brandi18," whom he met on the Internet, only to find Brandi's father and five cops at her house. After he is arrested and convicted he finds himself homeless and living under a bridge with other "sex offenders," scrounging for food in dumpsters. Even this tiny, dirty, half-hidden space is raided by cops at the behest of headline-seeking politicians, with tragic results. These bridge men are relentlessly forced to keep recharging their ankle monitors:

> "It takes half an hour to fully charge his monitor battery and during that half hour the Kid feels intimately connected to the millions of other convicted sex offenders young and old and in-between...all of whom at this moment have plugged their electronic shackles into outlets and are sitting in the bedrooms, living rooms, , and basements of houses and apartments and mobile homes, in garages, homeless shelters, public parks, in airports and train stations, in waiting rooms, offices, and the back rooms of fast-food restaurants and under causeways and overpasses—as if they were all trembling leaves on the branches large and small of a vast electrical tree that casts its shadow across the entire country."

AP

McCoy/San Jose Mercury News

Left: L.A. detective hauls away computer allegedly containing child pornography, April 24. Right: Parolee arrested in Wilmington, California, for possessing porn, August 2012.

...And Throw Away the Key

Making a mockery of the notion of "serving your time" and the pretense of rehabilitation are the various state and federal "civil commitment" laws passed since 1990. For example, the 2006 "Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act" provides for indefinite detention of *any* federal prisoner—even those never convicted of a sex crime—who has completed his sentence but is considered mentally "abnormal" and likely to commit a sex offense in the future.

In an article in *The Atlantic* (20 May 2010) titled "When the Feds Decide Who's Sexually Dangerous," Wendy Kaminer stated: "People who trust the federal bureaucracy and believe officials will use this power accurately, fairly, and in good faith may feel protected by it; others should worry about a government authorized to detain its citizens indefinitely, without jury trials, based on speculations about their future dangerousness." Speak to the prisoners in Guantánamo about that.

Under some state laws, those tagged for civil commitment may be entitled to a hearing in front of a judge but not a trial with the possibility of mounting a defense. Most people do not undergo "treatment," and hardly anyone ever gets out even if they do. There is even a case of a 102-year-old Wisconsin man who could not undergo his treatment due to memory lapses and poor hearing!

As of 2007, 2,700 men were being held in civil-commitment centers. To escape the clutches of the penal/"therapeutic" institutions in which they are entombed, some prisoners even request castration, as the article "The Science of Sex Abuse" by Rachel Aviv (*The New Yorker*, 14 January) relates. The first person detained under the Adam Walsh Act, Graydon Comstock, challenged the legislation in a 2010 Supreme Court case. Aviv observed: "By the time the case was heard, four years after Comstock's criminal sentence had expired, Comstock was sixty-seven and was suffering from heart disease, diabetes, and incontinence. He had twice requested to be castrated, thinking that the operation would help his case, but he was told that it wasn't medically justified." In recent years, the Supreme Court has consistently upheld civil-commitment statutes.

Aviv's powerful examination of the horrors of civil commitment revolves around the real-life story of a lonely soldier named John, who befriends "Indy-Girl" in a chat room. Yes, an undercover cop. The soldier, enticed to a sweet-sounding outdoor picnic, was promptly grabbed by the Military Investigations Unit and the FBI. John was sentenced to 53 months in federal prison for possessing child pornography and "using the Internet to persuade a minor to have sex." But then his troubles really began.

After getting out on probation, John slipped up and looked at some more underage porn—and was promptly sentenced to two more years in prison. Still incarcerated when Congress passed the Adam Walsh Act, John was transferred to a medical prison in Massachusetts and, without a legal hearing, determined to be "high risk." Four years passed. In 2011, his civil-commitment hearing began. A year later, the judge ruled that John was too dangerous to release and condemned him to indefinite "therapeutic confinement" in the federal prison system. He remains in this living limbo, where daily "therapy" encourages inmates to spin ever more fantastic stories to win approval from the psychiatrists, stories that only further incriminate them. Living in a tent under a highway seems a preferable fate.

New Witches, New Witchhunters

In the U.S., with its deeply puritanical streak and insidious racism, the combination of sex and race has long been used as a means of social control. The myth of the black male predator stalking white women and children was conjured up in the service of keeping the black population terrorized as lynch law reigned in the Jim Crow South. Anti-sex laws have frequently been wielded to try to put black men behind bars, including famous ones like boxer Jack Johnson in 1912 and Michael Jackson in 1994 and again ten years later.

Anti-sex crusades were one of the weapons for rolling back the gains of the civil rights struggles and to dampen the wider social turmoil of the 1960s and early '70s, especially that arising from opposition to the Vietnam War. Coming to office in 1977, the Democratic Party administration of Jimmy Carter kicked off an onslaught of domestic social reaction while bringing "born again" religious fundamentalism into the White House. Under the watchword of "human rights," he also launched U.S. imperialism's Cold War II aimed at the destruction of the Soviet Union.

The next decade saw one of the most peculiar, terrifying witchhunts in American history: the hysteria over "satanic abuse" in daycare centers, in which hundreds of men, women and children had their lives ruined. Extending into the early '90s, this panic peaked at the height of Reagan reaction, which among other things sought to drive women back into the home. Funds for welfare and other social programs like preschool and daycare centers for working mothers were

continued on page 6

Pariahs...

(continued from page 5)

slashed, causing enormous hardship and injury to women and children. The "satanic abuse" panic provided cover for this *actual* abuse by the government.

In the longest trial in U.S. history, lasting from 1986 to 1990, the McMartin preschool case saw child witnesses recount stories of animal sacrifice, orgies, secret underground passages, mutilation of corpses and other fantastical tales. The case started in 1983, and the following year a grand jury handed down 354 counts involving as many as 369 alleged victims, with cops warning of an enormous criminal conspiracy. More than 70 people were wrongfully convicted. Meanwhile, dozens more "satanic" cases swept the country, from Kern County, California, to Fells Acres in Massachusetts and Little Rascals daycare in North Carolina. No evidence was ever found in these cases. The accused were completely innocent, as we (unlike virtually every other group on the left) pointed out *at the time* in defending the daycare workers. The Friedmans were arrested in the midst of this witchhunt.

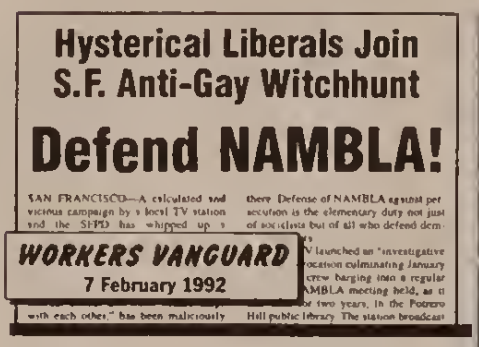
Bourgeois feminists and liberals helped this insanity gain traction. They promote themselves as protectors of women and children, but their remedy is to appeal to the state for more or stronger laws and more vigilance by police. A more extreme version of the same politics was Susan Brownmiller's 1975 *Against Our Will*, which famously contended that rape or threat of rape is the main way in which *all* men control *all* women. Her proposal: more female cops.

In the 1970s and '80s, the burgeoning God squads, led by the likes of Catholic fundamentalist Patrick Buchanan and Moral Majority head Jerry Falwell, campaigned against abortion and declared AIDS to be God's punishment of gays. As right-wing bigots besieged abortion clinics, the feminists took aim at pornography and imaginary satanic abuse. In pushing this anti-sex agenda, the "progressives" forged a temporary alliance with the evangelicals.

The state was more than happy to oblige. In 1974, Democrat Walter Mondale sponsored the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, which mandated that therapists, teachers and social workers report indications of abuse to the police. Thus, hundreds of thousands of social workers and educators are supposed to act as adjuncts of the repressive machinery of the capitalist state. Reagan's attorney general Edwin Meese launched a major anti-porn campaign in the 1980s, with a lot of help from liberal allies. With the Internet, things have only gotten worse. In the last 15 years, federal sentences for possession of child porn have increased in length by over 500 percent and can carry a maximum term of life in prison, the typical sentence for first-degree murder.

Among the most prominent feminists pushing reactionary anti-porn campaigns was *Ms.* magazine founder Gloria Steinem, who began her career as a witting informer for the CIA. The despicable Steinem also jumped on the satanic ritual/repressed memory bandwagon with a vengeance. In the mid '80s she gave financial support to a dig organized by McMartin preschool parents searching for (nonexistent) tunnels and dungeons that coerced children had testified about. In 1993, *Ms.* headlined: "Cult Ritual Abuse Exists—Believe It!"

In 1995, Steinem narrated the HBO documentary *The Search for Deadly Memories*. Apocryphal "recovered memories" of abuse played a pernicious role in numerous cases. These "repressed memories," as quack social workers called them, were the secular liberal version of religious hysteria. Being tough-minded materialists, we didn't buy it. As we pointed out in "Satan, the State and Anti-Sex Hysteria," techniques that supposedly reveal repressed traumas have been shown to be excellent at inducing false memories, especially in susceptible young children. Sometimes, so-called memories are implanted by cops in the course of interrogation, as in the Friedman case. Actual traumas do traumatize people, and so people tend to remember them.


Hysterical Liberals Join S.F. Anti-Gay Witchhunt

Defend NAMBLA!

SAN FRANCISCO—A calculated and vicious campaign by a local TV station and the SFPD has whipped up a

there. Defense of NAMBLA against persecution is the elementary duty not just of socialists but of all who defend dem-

launched an "investigative" operation culminating January crew barging into a regular NAMBLA meeting held, as it for two years, in the Potrero with each other," has been maliciously Hall public library. The station broadcast

WORKERS VANGUARD
7 February 1992

WV Photo

SL defense of NAMBLA against state repression is part of our fight against reactionary "age of consent" laws. Right: 1978 gay rights demonstration, New York City.

Sex, Marriage and the Family

How is it that an expanding tolerance (except among hard-core bigots and religious zealots) for gay marriage today can coexist with an unrelenting anti-sex witchhunt? Because marriage, a legal contract, is one of the main social props of the bourgeois state. In a presentation this May, David Thorstad, cofounder in 1978 of the North American Man/Boy Love Association (NAMBLA), noted of the demise of the radical gay liberation movement:

> "The earlier challenge to heterosupremacy, with a view to liberating the repressed sexuality of everyone, has been replaced by a conservative, conventional focus on winning acceptance by that heterosupremacist, capitalist society. This is most obviously reflected in the quest for marriage and open participation in oppressive institutions such as the military, as well as in appeals to strengthen the state's repressive forces through so-called hate-crimes laws."

So, in the quest for bourgeois respectability, gay pride marches welcome contingents of gay cops, whose job includes busting "sex offenders." Meanwhile, march organizers ban the likes of NAMBLA, which calls for the decriminalization of consensual relationships between adult men and minors.

Unlike the feminist and gay establishments and, disgustingly, most of the "socialist" left, we have always defended NAMBLA and its members against state repression and victimization by employers. This is more than just a "free speech" issue. Many a young boy, tortured and confused by his own feelings and the conflicting and repressive strictures of this society, would find it reassuring to talk things over or experiment with a more experienced person, as generations before them have done. But these days, engaging in cross-generational intimacy of any sort is playing with fire.

In an article titled "Youth, Sexuality and the Left," Sherry Wolf of the International Socialist Organization (ISO) brandished her pitchfork at Thorstad for being "the most vocal long-time defender of pederasty on the left" (socialistworker.org, 2 March 2010). Upholding the reactionary premise of age-of-consent laws, she quoted from her book *Sexuality and Socialism: History, Politics and Theory of LGBT Liberation*: "It is incompatible for genuine consent devoid of the inequality of power to be given by a child to a man of 30." Wolf's article continued: "Adults and children do not approach each other as emotional, physical, social or economic equals in our society. Children and young teens do not have the maturity, experience or power to make truly free decisions about their relationships with adults. Without those, there can be no genuine consent."

Never mind that most relationships between adults would not meet this standard for consent. As for Wolf's professing that "teens mature at different ages," just who is to determine the proper age for sexual activity for a species that for some 99 percent of its existence has been into it well before hitting today's putative "age of consent"? Under the vicious capitalist status quo, the default is the state. For communists, it is ABC to oppose government intervention into people's private lives and to defend any group that is persecuted for advocating more freedom in sexual relations. This is an expression of the ideal of the Leninist vanguard as a tribune of the people. The ISO & Co. march to different drummers, accommodating to bourgeois values and the witchhunt against those with sexual proclivities deemed *verboten*.

In *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1884), Friedrich Engels traced the simultaneous rise of the family and the state as means of consolidating and carrying on the power of the possessing class as it emerged from primitive human society. The monogamy of the wife was required to ensure paternity for the inheritance of property. Today, the family is still the main source of the oppression of women. For children, the family is meant to instill submission and respect for authority, often engendering frustration and violence. As we wrote in "Satan, the State and Anti-Sex Hysteria": "The sexual proclivities of a group-living mammalian species such as our own are patently ill-suited to the rigid heterosexual monogamy which forms the ideological foundation of the institution of the family, reinforced by organized religion."

Much of the terrible damage that is inflicted on youth and women occurs within the bosom of the family. But in this capitalist society, the family is most often all you've got. Society provides scant alternative services for nurturing children or caring for the ill or aged.

Anti-sex bigotry and vicious state repression will persist as long as private property and production for profit hold sway. The capitalist state cannot be reformed to serve the interests of the exploited and the oppressed. It must be swept aside and a workers state based on expropriation of the means of production must arise on its wreckage. To eradicate women's and gay oppression requires building a socialist society in which the functions of the family are collectivized—communal childcare and kitchens, free quality health care, and so on—freeing women from the burden of child rearing and household slavery. As to what such a rational society will hold regarding sexual relationships and social relations in general, Marxists share the broad vision expressed by the late (and very much missed) Gore Vidal, who wrote in "Pink Triangle and Yellow Star" (*The Nation*, 14 November 1981):

> "Whatever social arrangements human society may come up with in the future, it will have to be acknowledged that those children who are needed should be rather more thoughtfully brought up than they are today and that those adults who do not care to be fathers or mothers should be let off the hook."■

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Mexico City...

(continued from page 12)

Union of Education Workers (SNTE).

The context for this crackdown is Peña Nieto's "Pact for Mexico," which was endorsed by the bourgeois populist PRD and the right-wing National Action Party (see *WV* No. 1019, 8 March). The Pact is a declaration of war against unions and the poor. Among its primary targets are the powerful oil workers union, which is directly threatened by the efforts of the Mexican bourgeoisie and its imperialist masters to privatize the state-owned PEMEX oil company, and the SNTE, the largest union in Latin America, of which the CNTE is a dissident faction. While the Movement for National Regeneration (Morena) led by former PRD presidential candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador has protested the recent repression, it joined in the anti-labor campaign by criticizing the education "reform" as too soft on the union.

The authorities claim that not one teacher was arrested in the sweep—only "infiltrators." In past weeks they have launched a vicious media campaign against those supporting the teachers—from student youth to members of the defunct Mexican Union of Electricians—declaring them "vandals" or "masked anarchists." Groups of students, teachers and workers from the National School of Anthropology and History, joined by students from UNAM (the National Autonomous University of Mexico), have called a strike. As our comrades in the Grupo Espartaquista de México stated in a leaflet issued the day after the assault on the teachers' encampment:

> "We call on the workers movement to mobilize against this new attack. *An injury to one is an injury to all! Free all those arrested immediately!* The need to defend the teachers against repression goes beyond solidarity. The teachers have mobilized essentially on their own *for months* against the education reform—a reform that is aimed not only at the SNTE and the union gains of the teachers but also against public education itself. It is in the interest of the entire working class to mobilize against the education reform and the attack on the SNTE and CNTE, a new chapter in a long anti-union offensive."■

Syria...

(continued from page 1)

made the world a better place, a force for good especially devoted to keeping children safe, blah blah. To those few hawks who complained about limiting an attack on Syria to a pinprick strike, Obama was more than reassuring. He declared, "Let me make something clear: The United States military doesn't do pinpricks."

Indeed not. The drones that shatter villages in Afghanistan and elsewhere are neither childproof nor pinpricks. The atomic incineration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki did not spare the wee ones. The napalm conflagrations employed in the Korean War deprived the inhabitants of villages and towns of the air necessary to survive irrespective of age. The chemical defoliants rained on the population of Vietnam (six pounds of defoliant per head) produced what Vietnamese doctors call a cycle of fetal deformities. The U.S. blockade of medicines to Iraq during the Clinton era was similarly unkind to the kids. The number of those massacred abroad by the U.S. imperialists in pursuit of their class interests since World War II approaches the ten-million mark. The bloodsoaked American rulers will be disarmed only when the U.S. proletariat sweeps them from power through socialist revolution.

Absent international support, Obama's eschewal of an immediate armed attack on Syria signifies some recognition that such a venture is opposed by the war-weary majority of the American people, many of whom voted for him in 2008 as the "peace" candidate. Predictably, the racist yahoo Tea Party types are against any proposal from a man they dementedly portray as an alien hybrid of Hitler, Stalin and Idi Amin. Most Americans have other concerns, like surviving the impact of the "Great Recession."

In this context, the majority of Congress, many of whom will stand for election next year, were undecided or opposed to endorsing Obama's "limited" attack on Syria. Although the president is not greatly favored by the populace at the moment, Congress is very widely and vigorously despised, inspiring the following headline in *The Onion* (5 September): "Poll: Majority of Americans Approve of Sending Congress to Syria." From their own standpoint, many among the U.S. capitalist rulers share the appreciation that this Congress (whose job is, after all, to serve their class interests) can accomplish nothing and are ill-disposed to getting bogged down in another Near East quagmire. This is especially the case in Syria, where the strength of the rebel forces resides in Islamic fundamentalists who are devoted to the extinction of the Great Satan (America). And Putin gave Obama a way out of his mess.

In his speech, the president intoned: "I know Americans want all of us in Washington, especially me, to concentrate on...'putting people back to work, educating our kids, growing our middle class'." The reality is that the percentage of the population employed is the same as it was at the depths of the recent recession and that Obama has continued the attacks on education initiated by his predecessor under the banner of "reform."

WV Photo

August 29 NYC protest against threatened attack on Syria.

Those massively deprived of their homes by the recession remain, for the most part, dispossessed, while many others are added to that list due to the rapacious bankers. Meanwhile, those at the very top have not only recovered their losses from the financial crisis but have seen their wealth reach an all-time high. Many of the president's liberal supporters laud "Obamacare" as the crowning achievement of his reign. Not so trade unionists who fear that his recent one-year reprieve to employers to provide health care under the plan will allow the bosses more time to dump the health care they are obliged to provide under existing union contracts.

To these blows to working and poor people should be added the veneer Obama provided to racists with his proclamation upon being elected five years ago that racism had been 90 percent eliminated in this country. The recent Supreme Court ruling threatening voting rights, at base, challenges the legitimacy of the North's victory over the slaveholding South in the Civil War. The ruling appealed to the perception that racism is pretty much a yesterday thing. This fiction was exposed as such, for the umpteenth time, by the killing of Trayvon Martin, so that a president known for his reticence in addressing racism felt obliged to acknowledge that black people face "a history that doesn't go away."

Nevertheless, in the absence of a workers party that champions the interests of the exploited and the oppressed, most workers and black people continue to look to the Democrats and Obama to provide some redress for their plight. Simultaneously, the rulers of the decaying capitalist order are intent on further grinding the working people and the poor, and every successful extension of U.S. military might across the globe strengthens them in that effort. The only social force capable of reversing these assaults is the working class mobilized in struggle against the dictates of bourgeois rule. It is the historic task of the international proletariat to put an end to capitalist imperialism and create a worldwide planned economy. But that requires the leadership of revolutionary workers parties, which we in the International Communist League seek to build as sections of a reforged Trotskyist Fourth International. ■

Hospitals...

(continued from page 3)

which is located between the mainly black and Caribbean neighborhoods of Crown Heights and Bedford-Stuyvesant. Recent merger attempts with Brooklyn Hospital fell through, leading Interfaith straight to bankruptcy court. The shutdown of services has started, and the doors are due to be padlocked by the end of the year, with the loss of around 1,500 jobs. The closing will create a health care desert in Bed-Stuy, which has been officially recognized as "medically underserved" for years. The surrounding community has high rates of HIV, diabetes and psychiatric illness, which are endemic in impoverished neighborhoods.

Another hospital on the brink is Long Island College Hospital (LICH). Located in the upscale Cobble Hill area, it is the community hospital serving Red Hook, site of Brooklyn's largest public housing project. The city authorities' contempt for the project's residents was all too clear in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy, when they were left for two weeks before the Housing Authority bothered to check to see if they were still alive. This callousness continues. As state authorities approved the closure plan for LICH in July, management nearly emptied the hospital of patients. For over two months, ambulances were diverted to other hospitals, while security guards kept desperate patients from entering the hospital. While management continues to insist on closing down the hospital, LICH has so far been kept open by temporary restraining orders and other legal actions. On September 12, a state judge ruled that Albany's regulations on hospital closings were "unconstitutionally vague," erecting a further obstacle to the closing of LICH and possibly other hospitals.

Still LICH is confronted with the same fate that befell St. Vincent's in Manhattan, which was closed in 2010 and sold for condos, leaving the Lower West Side without a single hospital. There are views of the Statue of Liberty from some of the windows in the LICH building, which is valued at up to $1 billion. State authorities took over running the hospital two years ago in a fiasco that was slammed by a federal judge. It was clear that the state government took on the hospital in order to sell the property as valuable real estate to offset financial problems at SUNY University Hospital, the other state-run Brooklyn hospital, where more than 200 union jobs are on the line.

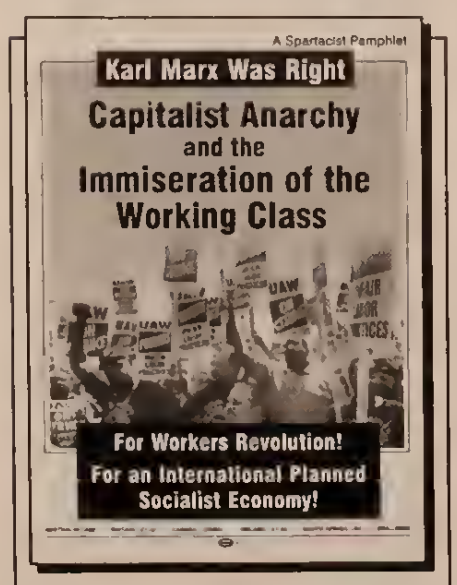
When Mayor Michael Bloomberg finally deigned to comment on the hospital crisis, he intoned: "The reality is you can't have a hospital on every corner." In other words, the poor can just drop dead. In Bloomberg's well-heeled Upper East Side neighborhood, you can't jog ten feet without running into a world-class hospital or the office of one of the gazillions of psychiatrists and plastic surgeons in the area. A Medicaid recipient from Bed-Stuy trying to get into one these facilities would more likely get an arrest than a referral.

The members of 1199, the largest union in the city, hail from every corner of the planet and include a significant number of black Americans. As with health care workers generally, these union members represent a living link with impoverished minorities and immigrants who by themselves have precious little social power to combat their oppression. The fact that the current attacks on Brooklyn hospitals would strike a severe blow at the borough's black and Latino residents underlines the need for the labor movement to champion the cause of all the oppressed.

Such health care benefits as the working class has won have been the product of class struggle. The dearth of strikes over the past decades has helped pave the way for the exploiters to butcher health care, pensions and other union gains with impunity. And they have gotten away with it thanks to the acquiescence of the labor bureaucracy, which shares the bosses' concern for maintaining the profitability of American capitalism.

The union tops tell these workers to butter up the priests, pastors and politicians to achieve gains. The health care unions are not just another type of community group with a special interest in the welfare of the hospitals and residents—they represent the workers who make the hospitals and clinics run. The unions urgently need to fight in defense of every job and to organize the non-union health care workers. Linking up with other sections of the labor movement, these unions can fight not only on behalf of their members but for the black and Latino poor, the uninsured and underinsured. We need a fighting labor movement with a leadership that understands that capitalism must be replaced with workers rule.

It is through breaking the political chains binding workers and the oppressed to the Democratic Party that a workers party will be forged to lead the fight for free, quality health care, education, housing and jobs for all. The working people need socialized medicine, where doctors will be servants of the people, hospitals will be havens to heal the sick, and research on vaccinations, new medical techniques and improved drugs will be internationally coordinated and used for the benefit of all. This all points to the need for a socialist revolution to break the power of the capitalist vultures and lay the basis for eradicating all exploitation and oppression. ■



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The State and Revolution
The Marxist Analysis of the State and the Tasks of Workers Revolution
San Francisco State University
Cesar Chavez Student Center
Rosa Parks D
Information and readings:
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CHICAGO

Thursday, September 26, 6 p.m.
Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution
University of Illinois at Chicago
Latino Cultural Center Gallery
Lecture Center B2, 803 S. Morgan St.
Information and readings:
(312) 563-0441 • chicagosyc@sbcglobal.net

LOS ANGELES

Wednesday, October 2, 5:30 p.m.
Introduction to Revolutionary Marxism
UCLA
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Information:
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Wednesday, October 9, 6:30 p.m.
For Free Abortion on Demand!
Women's Liberation Requires Socialist Revolution
University of Toronto, Room TBA
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Room 460
Information and readings:
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South Africa

COSATU Labor Federation in Turmoil

We reprint below excerpts of an article from Spartacist South Africa *No. 9 (Winter 2013), newspaper of the South African section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist). Subsequent to its publication, COSATU general secretary Zwelinzima Vavi was suspended from his post on August 14 on the grounds of having sex with another employee of the union federation at its Johannesburg headquarters. In September, Vavi's supporters in the leadership of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) challenged this suspension in the Johannesburg High Court, and Vavi himself has joined this legal challenge. As the article below explains, Marxists do not support either faction of the bureaucracy in the current struggle within COSATU. We also oppose, as a matter of principle, using the bourgeois courts to resolve disputes in the unions and other workers organizations.*

Gallo

From left: COSATU general secretary Zwelinzima Vavi, South African president Jacob Zuma and COSATU president Sdumo Dlamini at labor federation's September 2012 National Congress.

SPARTACIST SOUTH AFRICA

Forge a Leninist-Trotskyist Party to Fight for a Black-Centered Workers Government!

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) is faced with the worst crisis since its inception about three decades ago. At the centre of the tensions is the attempt by supporters of [South African president] Jacob Zuma to purge Zwelinzima Vavi. This has pitted various top bureaucrats from different affiliates, as well as within some affiliates, against each other in pro- and anti-Vavi factions. The two biggest COSATU affiliates, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and NUMSA, are on opposing sides. The NUM leaders are anti-Vavi, while NUMSA is leading those defending him. In some of the affiliates like the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU), top bureaucrats are divided between those supporting and those against Vavi. The base of the unions is generally more supportive of Vavi than most of their leaders.

Supporters of Vavi think he is being victimised for being a vocal critic of the government, while his opponents complain about his "oppositionist" stance. In fact, all wings of the bureaucracy prop up the bourgeois government via the ANC/SACP [South African Communist Party]/COSATU Tripartite Alliance—a nationalist popular front chaining the workers to the capitalist exploiters. In the lead-up to the 27 May meeting of COSATU's National Executive Committee (NEC), top African National Congress (ANC) honchos intervened to prevent what looked like a split in the making. The ANC bourgeois nationalists heavily rely on COSATU to deliver the working class as voting cows and would not tolerate any COSATU split on the eve of the 2014 general elections.

Nationalist Popular Front Unravelling

The current squabbles among the top Tripartite Alliance bureaucrats are only symptoms of the deepening class contradictions in society. Among the oppressed majority, the anger against the ravages of the post-1994 neo-apartheid capitalist system is reaching an explosive level, leading to differences among the Alliance tops over the best way to respond. That 560 protests in Gauteng Province [which includes Johannesburg and Pretoria] alone were recorded between 1 April and 10 May is but one example of how deep the impatience of the poor masses has become.

The Tripartite Alliance is a South African variant of the popular front, a coalition of reformist-led workers organisations (the Stalinist-derived SACP as well as the COSATU union federation) with bourgeois parties (the ANC) for the purpose of administering capitalist rule. The popular front is commonly employed by the bourgeoisie to deal with a restive and militant working class by co-opting the pro-capitalist leaders of the workers organisations into the government coalition, giving them the task of implementing and defending capitalist attacks on their members. The popular front is a betrayal of the proletariat. Such coalitions never serve to transform the capitalist government into serving the interests of the workers—as the reformist misleaders claim—but rather have always meant increased attacks on the workers, paving the way for open reaction.

The Zuma regime has reacted to opposition and anger from the base of society by using more repressive measures. At the same time, last year's wave of wildcat strikes and the dramatic collapse of the NUM in the platinum belt, in particular, have led influential sections of the bourgeoisie to seriously question the ability of the COSATU bureaucracy to keep the workers under control. The decision by the Chamber of Mines to terminate the "special arrangement" whereby it pays the salaries of top union officials, mainly from the NUM, is one indicator of this.

Corbis

Marikana, August 16: Miners mark one-year anniversary of police massacre of 34 strikers.

The response by COSATU bureaucrats like Vavi and [NUMSA leader Irvin] Jim has been more hypocritical rhetoric about the need to overcome the "social distance" between the union leadership and membership, and other posturing to demonstrate their "independence." There have also been growing tensions between the COSATU and SACP tops, with Irvin Jim in particular criticising SACP general secretary Blade Nzimande for accepting a ministerial post in Zuma's government and calling on him to return to fulltime work for the SACP. The SACP has basically told COSATU to mind its own business. There are even speculations that Nzimande and Gwede Mantashe (ANC secretary general and former SACP chairman) are behind the attempts to kick Vavi out of COSATU.

There is no question about the reactionary pro-capitalist politics of the pro-Zuma faction in the COSATU bureaucracy, but Vavi and his supporters share the same class-collaborationist programme. The posture of "independence" by Vavi, Jim and Co. is nothing but a hypocritical sham. The pro-capitalist demagogue Nzimande (one of Zuma's biggest fans and loudest apologists) for once said something truthful when he countered their criticisms by saying: "Those who say they do so [attack the ANC] because they are independent are wrong. *There is no independence in the alliance*" (*Mail & Guardian* online, 17 May, our emphasis). This is precisely the point about how the Tripartite Alliance nationalist popular front serves the rule of the capitalist exploiters!

Spartacist/South Africa, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), does not support either faction of the COSATU bureaucracy, both of which are fundamentally committed to upholding the nationalist popular front. While the two wings of the pro-capitalist bureaucracy trade accusations and counter-accusations of corruption, we contend that the greatest corruption perpetrated by both factions is the *political crime* of selling out the independent interests of the proletariat to the racist capitalist rulers through the bourgeois Tripartite Alliance. We are for breaking the Tripartite Alliance *along class lines*. This means setting the working-class base of COSATU and the SACP against the pro-capitalist tops and fighting for the *class independence* of the proletariat—organisational independence from and opposition to all wings of the bourgeoisie, bourgeois parties and the capitalist state.

The growing immiseration of the black majority along with the coloured [mixed-race, partly Malay-derived] and Indian toilers on the one hand, and the increased repression by the Tripartite Alliance government on the other, mean that there is a real possibility of an acute crisis developing soon. Explosive class struggle has the potential to blow the ANC/

SACP/COSATU Alliance and the whole country apart. But the outcome of such a crisis will depend crucially on whether a revolutionary vanguard party of the working class can emerge—a party steeled in struggle and based on an internationalist programme of working-class rule to replace decaying capitalist imperialism.

The forging of a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party is also crucial for the fight to replace the pro-capitalist misleaders of the trade unions (not only those affiliated to COSATU) with a class-struggle leadership. The urgent tasks facing the workers in their immediate struggles cannot be solved on the basis of a "shop floor" perspective, but require a revolutionary framework to struggle against the whole system of neo-apartheid capitalism. As Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky explained in his work "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay" (1940): "In the epoch of imperialist decay the trade unions can be really independent only to the extent that they are conscious of being, in addition, the organs of proletarian revolution."

Reuters

September 9: National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa members march in Cape Town during nationwide strike by gas station attendants.

Vavi's Betrayals in the "New South Africa"

Now that he is under attack from the pro-Zuma bureaucrats in COSATU, Zwelinzima Vavi is trying to portray himself as a champion of working-class interests against the capitalists and the government. Nothing could be further from the truth. As the longest serving head of COSATU [since 1999], Vavi has been centrally responsible for keeping the most powerful unions in the country under the thumb of the capitalist government, assisting his comrades in the government as they carried out vicious neo-liberal attacks against the working class. These include the implementation of IMF- and World Bank-dictated structural adjustment programmes demanding reduced government spending and cost-recovery. These measures saw mainly black, coloured and poor Indian townships being targeted for cutting off of basic services like water and electricity. Through privatisation, more than a million jobs were lost and many hospitals and clinics serving the poor were closed down. An estimated 330,000 people died between 2000 and 2005 as a result of the Mbeki government's "AIDS denialism" and the failure to provide life-prolonging antiretroviral drugs.

Despite all these crimes against the poor by this capitalist government, Vavi continued his unwavering support. His modus operandi has always been selective left rhetoric against some government policies, sometimes leading to one or two protests or work stay-aways, designed to blow off steam and deflect pressure from the base of the unions. When election time came, Vavi would, without fail, not only call for the workers to give political support to their class enemies, but vigorously campaign for the electoral victory of his capitalist allies. Slogans like "COSATU—the workers' voice. ANC—the workers' choice" are the hallmarks of his misleadership of COSATU.

Under Vavi, COSATU has also continued to provide foot soldiers to carry out anti-working-class attacks as ministers in the capitalist government. Contrary to the tired lie that promoting COSATU bureaucrats to leading positions in the government and ANC will help make them "pro-working class," many of these turncoats have gained reputations as the most hostile and pronounced enemies of the working class and the poor.

At the same time, Vavi has proven himself time and again to be a trustworthy strikebreaker on behalf of the bourgeoisie and his friends in government. To mention just a few recent examples, in 2010 Vavi sold out the public workers strike after initially falsely promising to call solidarity strikes by more strategic mining, industrial and commercial workers [see "South Africa: Capitalist Government Shaken by Public Workers Strike," *WV* No. 964, 10 September 2010]. Early last year he strangled a strike by SADTU members in the Eastern Cape and unsuccessfully tried to break a number of the 2012 wildcat strikes in the mines.

When the government committed one of the most gruesome massacres against organised labour in Marikana last August, Vavi closed ranks with other Alliance tops against the workers who were killed for fighting against slave working conditions, many of whom remained NUM members. In fact, Vavi thanked Zuma for showing strong leadership, and several months later joined the rest of the COSATU bureaucracy in backing Zuma against Kgalema Motlanthe in the elections for president at the ANC's Mangaung conference in December 2012. We of Spartacist/South Africa opposed any support to either faction of this party of the class enemy, just as in 2007 we opposed both sides when Zuma faced off against then-ANC president Thabo Mbeki.

NUMSA Leadership: Talk Left, Walk Right

The picture of class-collaborationist betrayals is fundamentally no different if you look at Vavi's most outspoken supporters, Irvin Jim and the NUMSA leadership. The NUMSA leaders have become known as the most left-talking among COSATU affiliates. For example, after the Marikana massacre the NUMSA Central Committee was one of the only leading bodies in COSATU to issue a clear-cut denunciation of the police. Their press statement of 2 September 2012 even noted, quite correctly, that with the Marikana massacre, "the police have violently reminded us once again what Marx and Lenin taught us about the state: that it is always an organ of class rule and class oppression and that bourgeois democracy is nothing but the best political shell behind which the bourgeoisie hides its dictatorship."

But the NUMSA bureaucrats' occasional use of revolutionary rhetoric only serves to give a "Marxist-Leninist" veneer to their pursuit of class-collaborationist politics. Thus the very same NUMSA CC statement applauded the response by "Comrade Jacob Zuma" to the massacre! Just like Vavi and the rest of the COSATU tops, Jim and the other NUMSA leaders are wholly committed to the alliance with the bourgeois-nationalist ANC and the Tripartite Alliance government. They too have a long history of betrayals of workers' struggles in the "new South Africa."

This history goes back to even before the 1994 elections that brought the ANC-led Tripartite Alliance to power. When a militant sit-down strike by workers at the Mercedes-Benz plant in East London threatened to create problems for the Alliance tops' pursuit of negotiations with the apartheid rulers in 1990, they moved in to reassure the white minority regime that they would police the black proletariat. It was NUMSA leader Moses Mayekiso who, along with SACP leader Joe Slovo, went to East London to strangle the strike.

Following the 1994 elections, the ANC-led government of Nelson Mandela set as a top priority creating an investor-friendly environment as part of establishing its credentials as dependable overseers in the eyes of the Randlords and their imperialist senior partners.

The NUMSA leadership played a leading role in advancing these class-collaborationist schemes. This included a number of watershed agreements between the NUMSA bureaucracy and Volkswagen South Africa (VWSA) in the mid-late 1990s, whose net effect was binding the union in taking responsibility for the profitability of the bosses' enterprise. This included increased labour "flexibility" through the hated casualisation schemes that are currently dominated by the use of bloodsucking labour brokers. Other deals included agreeing to speed-ups on the production line, cuts in December holiday leave and other concessions. In all this, the NUMSA leaders worked closely with the bureaucracy of the German metalworkers union IG Metall, who were well-versed at selling treacherous "social partnership" deals to increase profits for the German imperialists.

The NUMSA leaders were ruthless in their suppression of oppositionists within the union who sought to challenge their sell-out deals. One such opposition group emerged in the late 1990s among some shop stewards and workers in the VWSA Uitenhage plant, initially calling itself a "Concerned Group" and later "Indlu ye ngwevu" [the House of Senators]. These were mainly older workers who had participated in the militant struggles against apartheid of the 1980s and correctly saw the new "social partnership" as undermining the hard-won gains of class struggle.

The NUMSA bureaucracy's purge of these union militants—using suspensions, expulsions and even the bourgeois courts—was completed during the dismissal in February 2000 of almost 1,400 workers following a wildcat strike at VWSA in Uitenhage. Treacherously, the SACP and COSATU leaders took the side of the VWSA management in supporting these dismissals. Just two days before the mass dismissals, a leaflet was issued by the provincial leadership of NUMSA advertising a strikebreaking meeting addressed by the general secretary of COSATU, one Zwelinzima Vavi: "Vavi will urge all NUMSA members to go back to work and distance themselves from agent provocateurs [sic] bent on disturbing production at the plant." The contact person listed on this leaflet? One Irvin Jim, who was then provincial leader of NUMSA in the Eastern Cape.

COSATU Tops Ride the "Gravy Train"

The material basis for these betrayals is provided by the perks and privileges which the COSATU bureaucrats have gained under neo-apartheid, resulting in a standard of living and outlook which puts them much closer to the bosses than to their working-class base.

After 1994, the leaders of COSATU and its affiliate unions set up union investment companies behind the backs of their members. While they sought to justify this as a measure to supposedly break the stranglehold of white capital on the economy and to extend participation in the economic activities of the country to the "previously" disadvantaged communities, the facts prove that only the union tops have benefitted. Many of them leave union posts as multimillionaires, and some former union leaders like Cyril Ramaphosa have become part of the handful of black capitalists in the still predominantly white capitalist ruling class. The union bureaucrats' investment companies are frequently involved in the most scandalous low-wage companies and sometimes in projects which the union tops are at the same time cynically mobilising COSATU members to protest

continued on page 10

South African Labour Bulletin

Robert Botha

Left: Striking Mercedes-Benz auto workers in East London, 1990, were sold out through intervention of top Communist Party leaders. Right: Wildcat strike at Port Elizabeth VW plant, January 2000. NUMSA bureaucrats mobilized to break strike.

South Africa...

(continued from page 9)

against. Meanwhile, workers do not even get strike funds to help sustain themselves during the usually bitter struggles against the bosses.

The *Daily Maverick* recently exposed one of the most scandalous cases of the union tops receiving pay-offs from the bosses. That paper uncovered how NUM leaders, from local shop stewards through top regional and national leaders, have literally been on the payrolls of mining capitalists, getting paid high salaries by the bosses they are supposed to protect their members from. The response by NUM spokesman Lesiba Seshoka was effectively to say that this kind of class treason is the norm in COSATU.

Vavi tries to profile himself as an anti-corruption fighter. This has clearly angered his opponents in the COSATU bureaucracy, especially when he raises a stink about their dirty dealings or those of Zuma. But this corruption is inherent to the workings of the class-collaborationist Tripartite Alliance (and to capitalism in general), which is based on the workers' misleaders delivering "stability" to the capitalist exploiters and which Vavi has been so central to maintaining.

Moreover, Vavi's cries against inequality are simply empty hypocrisy. In 2009 Vavi doubled his salary from R250,000 [$25,000] to R500,000 a year, a salary that dwarfs those of the COSATU membership (and of COSATU's administrators and researchers). Vavi also gets compensated as a director in different bourgeois institutions including the Industrial Development Corporation. This state-owned entity is tasked with providing money to new industrial capitalists. He has also not differed from his opponents in using political connections to open up business deals for family members.

Lessons of the Anti-Apartheid Struggle

The SACP and COSATU led millions of workers who struggled militantly against apartheid, and many of them wanted to replace it with socialism. But the leadership opposed proletarian revolution and instead promoted an alliance with the petty-bourgeois nationalist ANC with the aim of a so-called democratic (i.e., capitalist), "non-racist, non-sexist" South Africa. In this way, the militancy of the working class was steered in the direction of the treacherous negotiated settlement with the apartheid butchers.

All this was not a "mistake" on the part of the SACP leaders, but flowed from the SACP's Menshevik-Stalinist programme of "two-stage revolution." This is the programme of supporting the "progressive" bourgeoisie in the first stage, which supposedly will later evolve into the second stage of socialism in the indefinite future. Experience of the two-stage "theory" in reality has always shown that in the first stage, Communists mobilise the working class to help the bourgeois nationalists come to power, and in the second stage, the nationalists butcher the working class.

Afrapix

Mineworkers union's 1987 congress was held under slogan, "Socialism Means Freedom!" Masses' socialist aspirations were betrayed by reformist leadership's program to install ANC in power as black front men for white capitalist rulers.

Another crucial lesson from the anti-apartheid struggle is that black workers cannot defend or further their interests simply through trade-union struggle, however militant. This can be seen most clearly in the fate of the so-called "workerists," who were at one time a dominant force in the leadership of the black trade-union movement that emerged in the 1970s. The "workerist" tendency, represented by the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU), was generally distrustful of the ANC, believing it would ride roughshod over the working class once in power as other post-independence nationalist regimes in Africa had done. But their answer to this fear (which proved quite correct) was to limit the tasks of the trade unions to shop-floor issues and try to "ignore" politics, leaving the struggle for national liberation of the black masses from apartheid to the leadership of the ANC.

The "workerists" had *no programme or perspective* for leading the struggle against national oppression, something which would have meant challenging the ANC and other nationalist organisations politically. But when the township revolt of the 1980s broke out, the FOSATU unions could not stand passively outside the mass upheaval against apartheid, so the result was that they participated in the struggle by accepting the duminant ANC leadership. COSATU was formed in 1985 from the merger of the NUM, FOSATU and pro-ANC unions. The COSATU unions soon emerged as the main organisations of mass, militant black struggle, for example mobilising 340,000 mineworkers at the height of the 1987 gold strike. However, the growing social and political power of COSATU was paralleled by its increasing subordination to the ANC.

Irvin Jim and some other supporters of Vavi have been branded "workerists" by some of their opponents within the COSATU bureaucracy. But this is an invention of the Zuma loyalists in COSATU, who want to silence *any criticism* of the ANC and government. Jim and the current NUMSA leaders are quite clear and open in their political support for the ANC, including endorsing Zuma's second term and recently declaring their willingness to support the ANC in the 2014 elections.

The leaders of the Association for Mining and Construction Union (AMCU) have made a big show of declaring themselves to be "non-political." But despite their refusal to formally endorse any political parties, the AMCU leaders do have politics and these politics are class-collaborationist. AMCU is affiliated to the National Council of Trade Unions (NACTU). NACTU is politically aligned to the Pan Africanist Congress and Black Consciousness Movement, which are fundamentally no different from the ANC in their bourgeois-nationalist politics. Meanwhile, AMCU president Joseph Mathunjwa has on many instances expressed his dislike of "illegal and unprocedural" strikes. He recently clashed with the workers committees at Anglu American Platinum and other mines in the Rustenburg area, denuuncing their strike aetions and working to send the mineworkers back to the shafts.

Before and after the wildcat strikes last year, there has been a massive wave of resignatiuns from the NUM across the platinum belt, with most of those mineworkers joining AMCU, which is nuw the majority union at the big platinum mines. Revolutionaries generally favour organising all workers of an industry in one union to maximise their strength, but we do not condemn all splits within the trade-union movement out of hand; these need to be judged on a case-by-case basis. It is the NUM tops' betrayals that are fundamentally responsible fur undermining workers' unity in the mining industry, and if the majority of workers want to join AMCU it is their right. But as the class collaboration of Mathunjwa and other AMCU leaders underline, new unions are not in and of themselves enough to resist the bosses' attacks. What's needed is a *political* fight for a class-struggle leadership to replace the pro-capitalist sell-outs both within COSATU and in other federations like NACTU. This is a crucial part of the struggle to build a revolutionary party that champions the interests of all the exploited and oppressed.

For a Black-Centered Workers Government!

During last year's wildcat strike wave, we called for and supported the formation of joint strike committees based on elected local mine committees [see "Miners Struggle Shakes Neo-Apartheid Capitalist Order," *WV* No. 1011, 26 October 2012]. Such committees would organise and unify the miners' struggles irrespective of union affiliation. They would fight to ensure equal pay for equal work, striving to drive out the parasitie labour brokers. They would coordinate workers defence guards to stop scabs and organise defence against cop thugs, as well as promoting demands in the interests of the surrounding poor black communities and mohilising to defend immigrants against the police and mob attacks. Elected strike eommittees would more democratically reflect the will of the workers than existing union bodies, and they would embrace broader sections of the working masses. An effective strike committee would, in periods of prolonged and intense struggle, take over many of the functions uf running society like coordinating provisioning of food and medical care. This would provide an invaluable experience for the workers and instill the consciousness of their own ability to organise society on the basis of proletarian state power.

But this depends on a *revolutionary leodership* emerging, one which is firmly rooted in the working class and has a clear programme to fight for a black-centred workers government to end neo-apartheid capitalist slavery. At the height of the anti-apartheid struggle there was a development of spontaneous working-class organisations much broader than the official trade unions. These cuvered many factories and plants in a particular locality and involved the unemployed, community organisations and the youth. The task of these area committees was to coordinate and promote sulidarity of workers' struggles within a particular local and between different locals, and they included other worker formations uutside of COSATU, like NACTU.

But while these area committees had great potential because of the working masses they encompassed and the struggles they coordinated, the leadership was committed to maintaining capitalism and the alliance with the ANC. No criticism of the participating organisations was tolerated. In this way, the political hegemony of the ANC was protected and the black proletariat was used to haul the ideological cart of nationalism. We are for *workers democracy* within the working-class organisations. This includes open debate and criticism of political programmes, which are required for the workers to hold their leaders accuuntable and learn to reject refurmist dead-ends.

One such dead-end can be found in the reformist politics pushed by the Democratic Socialist Movement (DSM), whose activity around the wurkers committees in the Rustenburg area was highly publicised in the media. The DSM used the prominence it gained during the wildcat strikes to launch a new "mass workers party," the Workers and Socialist Party (WASP), on the basis of a reformist, trade-uniun economist programme. In fact, up until 1996 the DSM's predecessors were buried inside a mass *bourgeois* party, the ANC, and *opposed* the eall for a workers party. For example, in 1994 the current leader of the Committee for a Workers' International to which the DSM is affiliated, Peter Taaffe, said: "The slogan of a workers party was an incorrect slogan in the period prior to the elections in South Africa. We wanted the biggest possible ANC majority." Their deep-seated reformism is further confirmed by their grotesque position that cops are "workers in uniform." Even the brutal murder of the Marikana workers has not convinced these reformists about the suicidal nature of this position.

The national oppression of the non-white majority is too deep, multifaceted and structural to ever be addressed through trade-union struggle alone or any other reformist solution. The proletariat must place itself at the head of the struggle for the national liberation of the black African people as well as the coloureds and Indians, a struggle culminating in a black-centred workers government. The success of a socialist revolution in South Africa requires its international extension. What we wrote in "South Africa Powder Keg" (*Black History and the Class Struggle* No. 12, February 1995) retains its force today:

> "For the moment South Africa is a weakened link in the chain of the world capitalist system binding the neocolonies of the Third World to the imperialist states of North America, West Europe and Japan. It is necessary to mobilize the forces of the proletariat to *break* that chain at its weakest links, and then fight like hell to take the battle to the imperialist centers, seeking allies against the vicious enemy of all the oppressed—international capital."

That requires a revolutionary internationalist vanguard party, which is what we are fighting to build. ■

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ILWU...

(continued from page 12)

> "The working class has the power not only to defeat the effort to destroy the unions, but to end the system of exploitation altogether. The principal thing lacking for the quick development of this power is the mistaken point of view illustrated by the program of the New York central body."
>
> —"Who Can Save the Unions?" 7 May 1921, reprinted in *James P. Cannon and the Early Years of American Communism* (Prometheus Research Library, 1992)

Labor: Stop the Backstabbing!

Today, the few private-sector unions left standing are often at each other's throats to preserve their jurisdictions. McEllrath cites one of the more notorious examples, pointing to the strikebreaking role played by the Operating Engineers union during the ILWU's 2011-12 fight against an all-out union-busting offensive by the EGT grain consortium in Longview, Washington. Trumka stood by these scabs, ordering the Oregon AFL-CIO to rescind a motion condemning the Operating Engineers. More recently, members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) have been crossing ILWU picket lines at United Grain. An ILWU motion condemning this scabbing did not even make it to the floor for discussion at the July convention of the Washington state AFL-CIO.

Taking on this backstabbing in his president's report in the July/August issue of the ILWU newspaper, the *Dispatcher*, McEllrath writes that the "ILWU sees the honoring of picket lines as a fundamental principle that can't be compromised." It is hard to imagine any other top union leader in this country even recalling this principle, much less being able to choke it out. But as the great Irish writer and wit Oscar Wilde famously put it: "Hypocrisy is the homage vice pays to virtue."

For decades, the ILWU tops have invoked the struggles that forged the union to convince the ranks that the ILWU remains the last remaining bastion of labor militancy. The union's founder, Harry Bridges, is eulogized as the epitome of fighting unionism. All this is belied, of course, by the actual history and practice of the ILWU leadership. The last coastwide ILWU strike was in 1971, more than 40 years ago. That strike was largely forced on Bridges by a membership seething over the massive loss of jobs under the 1960 Mechanization and Modernization (M&M) Agreement he negotiated and rammed down their throats.

Today, the ILWU bureaucracy's answer to the PMA's drive to increasingly mechanize operations on the docks is to claim jurisdiction over maintenance and other mechanical service jobs, a number of which are currently done by other unions. In Portland, for example, the ILWU filed a joint lawsuit with the PMA bosses to claim the equivalent of two jobs servicing refrigerated containers that have been worked by the IBEW for over 30 years. As a result, the ILWU has incurred the animosity of the IBEW, a union well versed in the dog-eat-dog world of jurisdiction.

The ILWU is an increasingly isolated outpost of organized labor at the ports, surrounded by tens of thousands of unorganized workers, from the port truckers to workers at intermodal rail facilities and the vast inland warehouse empires. Little to nothing has been done to organize these workers. In disaffiliating from the AFL-CIO, McEllrath pointed a finger at the Trumka bureaucracy's "immigration reform policies," in particular its support to a bill that "favors workers with higher education and profitability to corporations, as opposed to the undocumented workers such as janitors and farm workers who would greatly benefit from the protections granted by legalization."

Many such workers are among the thousands of overwhelmingly immigrant port truckers. Yet far from championing citizenship rights for these workers or even a "pathway to citizenship," the ILWU has, at best, turned a blind eye to their plight. At worst, as recounted by many of the drivers who recently walked off the job in protest against the grueling conditions they face at the Oakland port, they are treated with chauvinist contempt by many ILWU members. The solidarity of the truckers will be critical in the upcoming ILWU contract battle with the PMA, as the ILWU leadership no doubt recognizes on some level. Unlike in 2008, when the Bay Area Local 10 tops told longshoremen that the truckers' picket lines were not "bona fide," this time they called to honor the pickets, at least at the Stevedoring Services of America terminal.

In his *Dispatcher* column, McEllrath demands an end to the "ugliness of racial bigotry." In particular, he pointed to reports of longshoremen on the picket lines at grain terminals in the Pacific Northwest hurling racial epithets at scabs and Gettier security guards. There is no question that these strikebreakers serve the class enemy. But it has nothing to do with the color of their skin. They are hirelings of companies that, in the tried-and-true practice of this country's capitalist rulers, play the race card to further their aims. If the ILWU actually used its muscle, mobilizing its supporters to build picket lines that no scab would dare to cross, it would be in a position to turn the tables on the bosses. But not only has there been no such struggle, the ILWU in Portland and elsewhere embraces the regular port security guards as fellow union members. It is hard to fight an enemy that is welcomed into your own house!

McEllrath recounts that Bridges "made racial integration and anti-discrimination a cornerstone" of the union's organizing strategy. Indeed, he did in the Bay Area, but in the name of "local autonomy" he left discrimination mostly unchallenged in the Pacific Northwest as well as at the San Pedro docks in Los Angeles. Thus, racial fault lines were built into the union from the beginning. Today, the deadly poison of racism is a threat to the very existence of the ILWU, with the potential to detonate divisions between the still overwhelmingly white Pacific Northwest, the largely black membership in the Bay Area and the majority Latino L.A./Long Beach local.

Racial and ethnic chauvinism has been further fueled by the "loyal to America" patriotism of the ILWU International leadership. In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks, the ILWU bureaucracy lined up behind the "war on terror" on the docks, pointing a finger at port truckers as a potential "security threat." Now the ILWU tops present the fight against the union-busting grain companies as one in defense of the "American grain industry" against Japanese and other foreign competitors. To this end, McEllrath & Co. uphold the concessionary deal they made with the U.S.-based TEMCO grain company, amid contentious negotiations with the Pacific Northwest Grain Handlers Association, as supposed evidence of TEMCO's commitment to the well-being of its workers.

The lie that workers and their exploiters have common interests disarms labor in the face of the virtually unchallenged offensive by the bosses and their government to gut the unions in this country. If the unions are not only to survive but to become actual battalions of working-class struggle, they must champion the cause of black freedom and full citizenship rights for immigrants as part of a class-struggle fight to bring the masses of unorganized workers into the unions. As is particularly demonstrated in longshore, where work is dependent on world trade, the workers' fight is international. Labor must repudiate the red-white-and-blue patriotism of its misleaders, who have shackled the unions to the interests and profitability of U.S. imperialism. The kind of leadership that labor needs is one that inscribes on its banners Marx and Engels' call in the *Communist Manifesto*: "The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Working men of all countries unite!"

San Francisco, 1939: ILWU leader Harry Bridges, seated at center, at deportation hearing.

Build a Class-Struggle Workers Party!

The present crisis is not the first faced by a weakened American labor movement. Throughout the 1920s, the AFL union leadership did little to organize the millions of workers who did the back-breaking work in the mills and on the assembly lines. In the four years after the October 1929 stock market crash, unemployment skyrocketed to over 12 million, so that virtually any worker could easily be replaced. The working class was confronted not just by joblessness but homelessness and starvation. By 1933, AFL membership was less than half of what it had been in 1920. But the next year, city-wide strikes in Minneapolis, San Francisco and Toledo—led by Trotskyists, the Stalinist Communist Party (CP) and left-wing socialists respectively—set the stage for an outpouring of working-class militancy and laid the basis for the formation of the mass CIO industrial unions.

ILWU members march in San Francisco demonstration against Vietnam War, circa 1968.

The gigantic class battles of the 1930s carried the American trade-union movement to unprecedented heights and advanced class consciousness in the working class. The most advanced elements were receptive to the idea of forming a workers party in opposition to the capitalist parties, Democratic as well as Republican. But the very leaders of the new industrial movement, including the social democrats and the CP, crippled it through their political support to Democratic Party president Franklin D. Roosevelt. Harry Bridges was among this number. During World War II, he imposed a no-strike pledge and other measures that served to increase the exploitation of ILWU members in order to advance the war aims of predatory U.S. imperialism.

In 1949-50, eleven unions associated with the CP, including the ILWU, were expelled from the CIO as part of the Cold War red purges. Driving out the key leaders and fighters for industrial unionism, the purges consolidated the labor bureaucracy that has presided over the steady erosion of union power to the point where today less than 7 percent of manufacturing and other industrial workers are organized. Aptly described over a century ago by early American socialist Daniel De Leon as the "labor lieutenants of the capitalist class," the union officialdom, then and today, shares the exploiters' belief in the inviolability of the profit system. This belief is concretized by their prostration before, and integration into, the capitalist Democratic Party.

The Obama administration is far from a disinterested observer of the upcoming contract struggle between the ILWU and the PMA. The union has enormous social power. With the offshoring of much manufacturing and the just-in-time delivery system, a strike would quickly paralyze whole sectors of the U.S. economy. It is precisely because longshoremen have their hands on the choke points of international commerce that there has been an offensive against their unions around the world. That Obama will stand with the PMA shipping bosses is as obvious as the flotilla of armed Coast Guard ships and helicopters his administration mobilized during the ILWU's Longview battle to ensure that the first shipment of scab grain out of the EGT terminal met no interference. Today, Coast Guard ships again patrol the Columbia River to ensure the passage of grain worked by scabs in Vancouver and Portland. Meanwhile, with the PMA aiming to gut medical benefits, Obama's health care "reform" will further roll back these hard-won gains by levying taxes on so-called "Cadillac" union health care programs.

The ILWU is in a tough spot. But there is no immediate hope if the union continues to surrender its power. Nor does splitting from the AFL-CIO open the way for the union to struggle. The road forward lies in the fight to forge a new, class-struggle leadership of the unions that will wage the battles out of which a revolutionary internationalist workers party can be built. Such a party will lead the "final conflict" to get rid of a system in which profits are reaped through the brutal exploitation of labor. When those who labor rule, the means of production will be taken out of the hands of the rapacious capitalist owners and made the collective property of society. The tremendous wealth of this country will then be used to provide for the many as opposed to profiting the few.■

WORKERS VANGUARD

As 2014 Contract Battle Looms

ILWU Splits from AFL-CIO

On the eve of the recent AFL-CIO convention, the 42,000-member International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) split from the federation. In his August 29 letter of disaffiliation, ILWU International president Robert McEllrath pointed to increasing attacks on the longshore union by other AFL-CIO unions, ranging from the filing of unfair labor practice lawsuits to outright scabbing. These charges are all too true and then some. But the ILWU leadership's hands are hardly clean in the sordid game of jurisdictional warfare that pits union against union in a scramble to defend their turf. McEllrath complains of the "compromising" policies of the AFL-CIO in "going along to get along" with the Obama administration. But the ILWU bureaucrats are equally culpable in subordinating the unions to the political fortunes of the Democratic Party, even if they have been disappointed with the hoped-for payoff for such treachery.

Today, the very existence of the ILWU in grain handling in the Pacific Northwest is on the line. Its members have been locked out for months by United Grain in Vancouver, Washington, and by Columbia Grain in Portland, Oregon. Scabs, protected by the latter-day Pinkertons of J.R. Gettier & Associates, are doing jobs held by the union for decades. Alongside the grain conglomerates' drive to break the ILWU stand the shipping company bosses of the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA), who are preparing for war with the union when its coastwide contract expires in July 2014.

Splitting from the AFL-CIO in the lead-up to this battle, the ILWU stands to be further isolated and risks making an even more open enemy of the AFL-CIO bureaucracy, led by Richard Trumka. It is already reported that the ILWU will not be granted "solidarity charters," which were awarded to the affiliates of the Change to Win coalition when they broke from the AFL-CIO in 2005. Instead, the ILWU is to be expelled from all regional and city labor councils. Despite the formation last year of a "Maritime Labor Alliance" composed of the ILWU, the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA)—which organizes East and Gulf Coast ports—and four other unions, the ILWU can hardly bank on solidarity from the leaders of the ILA. At the AFL-CIO convention, the ILA announced it would stay in the AFL-CIO. Its president, Harold Daggett, was rewarded with a seat as a vice president of the federation, even as he gave more lip service to standing behind the ILWU.

In his letter to the AFL-CIO, McEllrath recounts the ILWU's "long and proud history of militant independence," from its roots in the Industrial Workers of the World, early pioneers of industrial unionism, to its role in the formative years of the CIO. But the CIO was born out of the militant class battles of the 1930s to *organize* the millions of workers in U.S. industry who were disdained by the craft-based AFL, which was led by sworn enemies of socialism and often outright racists. In these battles, workers mobilized their power as a class to shut down production through mass, militant picket lines, sit-down strikes and solidarity actions. They didn't bow before the capitalist anti-labor laws but fought it out in opposition to the bosses and their cops, courts and security goons. Against the poisonous racial and ethnic hatreds so ably wielded by America's rulers to divide and conquer the workers, the organizing drives in auto, steel, meatpacking and other industries brought thousands of black workers into the new industrial unions.

AP

Locked-out longshore workers picket outside Port of Vancouver, February 27.

Such is not even the remotest perspective of the pro-capitalist labor tops today, from the Trumka bureaucracy to the ILWU leadership.

The Fall of the "House of Labor"

At its convention, the AFL-CIO outlined what is described as a "strategic shift" away from collective workplace organizing. The federation proposes to replenish its diminishing ranks by allowing workers to join as *individuals* through its "Working America" organization. It also will open its doors to the community-based workers' centers that have sprung up around the country. These new members will provide more money and bodies for the bureaucrats' "get out the vote" and lobbying efforts. The name of the game has become building coalitions with student labor activists and other "community" groups in order to beg the capitalist rulers to throw a few more crumbs labor's way.

This scheme is a striking example of what *not* to do to build the unions. But it is a natural step for the labor misleaders, who have long refused to wage the class battles required to organize the mass of unorganized workers. For years, the AFL-CIO tops have argued that their hands are tied in waging any such struggle by myriad anti-union agencies and laws, from the National Labor Relations Board to the Taft-Hartley Act. The truth is that labor has never won anything of value playing by the bosses' rules. The unions themselves were once outlawed as criminal conspiracies.

The attempt to turn the AFL-CIO into a labor-centered version of MoveOn.org is premised on and can only serve to reinforce the supposed obsolescence of organizing drives that bring to bear the unique social power of the working class to withhold its labor and cut off the flow of profits. It also further undermines any understanding of the workers as a distinct class, dissolving them into the mass of "the people." As early American Communist and, later, Trotskyist leader James P. Cannon observed of a plan by a New York central labor council to bring various perceived "friends of labor" into its ranks over 90 years ago:

> "Civic bodies, church forums, 'non-labor organizations'—the elements who go to make up such groupings are poor props for the unions to seek to lean upon. They may 'feel' for organized labor, but the organized workers never feel it in the shape of substantial support in their fight....

continued on page 11

Brutal Crackdown on Teachers Struggle

Mexico City

On September 13, thousands of federal police backed up by anti-riot tanks and Black Hawk helicopters brutally cleared an encampment of teachers in the Zócalo, Mexico City's central plaza. Members of the National Coordination of Education Workers (CNTE) and their supporters had for four months maintained the encampment—which grew to tens of thousands in August—in protest against Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) president Enrique Peña Nieto's education "reform." The new law threatens tenure and imposes performance evaluations—a means of scapegoating teachers for the dismal school system—while eliminating union control over hiring.

Knowing they faced imminent attack, the teachers had already decided to take down their camp and make an orderly retreat. This did not stop the riot cops, unleashed by federal authorities and the Mexico City government of the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), from attacking atomized groups of teachers and others. At least 32 protesters were arrested and many more injured. News broadcasts showed cops attacking a contingent that included leaders of the Oaxaca and Mexico City locals of the National

continued on page 6

AFP

Cops bust up teachers' encampment in Mexico City, September 13.

WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 1031 4 October 2013

As Bosses' Parties Squabble

U.S. Rulers Intensify War on Workers, Poor

OCTOBER 1—With many government operations shutting down, it will be the workers, the poor and the oppressed who will he hit the hardest. Propelled by the Repuhlican House majority's determination to choke off money for Barack Obama's Affordable Care Act (ACA), the shutdown is resulting in the furlough of some 800,000 federal workers and threatens massive delays in Medicare and Social Security applications. And in just two weeks' time, Congress faces the deadline to raise the federal debt limit, without which the government will default, stoking fears of a major economic tailspin.

Budget brinksmanship has been recycled over and over again. Most notable was the government shutdown of 1995-96 led by Republican Congressional leader Newt Gingrich. This redounded against the Repuhlicans, helping propel Democratic president Bill Clinton to re-election the following year in the midst of an economic upturn. Polls show that the Republicans will again bear the blame as government functions grind to a halt. This has led Republican mouthpieces and strategists like the *Wall Street Journal* and Karl Rove to denounce the Tea Party types who spearheaded the shutdown for forfeiting any chance to recapture the White House and Senate in the near future.

More to the point, a major section of the capitalist ruling class is fed up that the government, which is their executive committee, is at an impasse. Some 250 groups representing major industry signed on tu a letter saying that a shutdown risked disrupting the economy, i.e., their profits. Tomorrow, Obama is scheduled to meet with the CEOs of the country's biggest banks at the White House as the debt ceiling deadline looms.

The Republican representatives of the capitalist class are stoked by their opposition to "Obamacare," which they claim is unpopular with a bruad swath of the population—and it certainly is. With its mandate requiring the uninsured to buy health insurance, the higgest beneficiaries of the ACA will be the profit-gouging health insurance giants as well as pharmaceutical companies. But that's certainly not the Republicans' beef. Wild-eyed declarations by their more unhinged elements that Obamacare amounts tu "socialism" are merely an expression of opposition to any social program, from welfare to food stamps, perceived as providing government assistance to the working poor and unemployed. In racist America, the myth that social programs are a drain on the income of hard-working people has long been wielded by the rulers to direct popular anger away from them and toward black people and other minorities. Today's far-right wackos are all the more incensed at the inexcusable sin of having a black man in the White House who isn't the butler.

Sharrell/NY Times

Bloomberg

Above: People arrived at Dyersburg, Tennessee, county fairgrounds before sunrise to wait for monthly food distribution, August 16. Below: Fast-food workers at August 29 Los Angeles protest demand living wage.

The Democratic Party representatives of the capitalist class in turn paint the Republicans as coldhearted scrooges who relish starving the poor and stomping on labor, hlack people and immigrants—and they certainly are. Before it was squashed hy the Senate, the House passed a farm bill last month that would have cut $40 hillion for food stamps over the next ten years, removing millions from a program that has grown during the years of recession to include nearly one-sixth of the country's population. Up against those who would literally take the scraps off your tahle, all the Democrats have to do to appear as a lesser evil is breathe. If they need to do more to bolster that image, they can call on liberal populists like Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren and NYC mayoral candidate Bill de Blasio.

While U.S. imperialism's Commander-in-Chief took a major political and diplomatic hit by backing down from the projected attack on Syria, he's been all too successful in attacking the working people at home. Along with attacks on public employees and other unionized workers, Obama has repeatedly made clear his willingness to negotiate a "grand bargain" of massive austerity through slashing billions frum Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security. When the ACA was passed in 2010, Democrats and Republicans agreed to cut some $700 billion from Medicare spending over the next decade. Those "savings" were supposed to finance Obama's health care reform. Then came the "sequester" cuts when the two parties failed to reach a budget deal earlier this year. This kicked in a 5 percent cut in federal spending across the board, which both parties had agreed to beforehand. As a result, federal unemployment benefits have been cut by over 10 percent, while social programs like Head Start and Meals on Wheels are being depleted. Budget cuts will cost an estimated 900,000 jobs next year.

Affordable Care Act: Three-Card Monte

The government shutdown coincides with the beginning of enrollment for the health insurance exchanges at the center of the ACA. It's doubtful that even those who drew up the law can make their way through its maze of terms and conditions. But some things are very clear. For many, especially those who choose the lower cost "Bronze" plans, the deductibles and copays are so prohibitive that coverage will be in name only. Twenty-one state governments concentrated in the former Confederacy have opted out of Medicaid expansion, forcing many of the working poor to purchase policies, often without any government subsidies. Undocumented immigrants are proscribed from receiving any of the ACA's benefits. To cap it off, Obama issued an executive order reaffirming the Hyde Amendment, which denies the use of federal funds to pay for abortions.

As for those who will begin to receive employer-financed health insurance, don't expect this to come without a hefty hidden price tag. This was highlighted by a study last year of the Massachusetts health care system introduced in 2006 under Republican governor Mitt Romney, which served as a model for the ACA. The study by the Boston-based National Bureau of Economic Research found that employers who were mandated to provide health insurance passed un essentially the entire cost to their workers in the form of wage cuts.

Embedded in Obama's health care scheme is a multisided assault on gains wrested by the working class from the exploiters. First of all, the ACA imposes a tax, starting in 2018, on so-called "Cadillac" employer-paid health plans. (Actually, the tax will hit up to three-quarters of all employer-paid plans.) Uniunized workers

continued on page 4

Women and Revolution

South African Government Promotes Reactionary Tribal Leaders....6

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L.A. Transit Bosses Threaten Workers for Body Art

In the latest in a series of attacks against its heavily unionized workforce, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) announced on its Web site: "All Metro employees must cover up (or remove) *visibly exposed* body-art modifications at all times in the workplace, or while representing Metro in an official capacity." Workers have told *WV* salesmen that the company's action goes further. All employees have been told that they must fill out a form locating and describing every tattoo or piercing not covered by underwear, which will then be kept in their personal files—and who knows where else. The company will monitor the workforce to ensure that any new markings are covered up. Like similar measures being implemented by employers across the country, this is an attempt to further regiment workers and exclude from future employment all those who do not fit a prescribed conservative mold.

Metro is acting like Southern slave-traders who put chattel on auction, standing naked to have their bodies inspected by prospective buyers. The attack by the transit bosses is a threat to the unions and especially to younger workers—among whom tattoos and piercings are common—and minorities, extending well beyond an invasion of privacy. "Tattoos indicating gang membership," a designation left to the whim of the cops, are a common pretext for inclusion in the CalGang database, which has *over 200,000* entries. The database currently includes 10 percent of all black Angelenos between 20 and 24 years old. For 30 years, the L.A. cops have waged a "war on gangs," a local expression of the national "war on drugs" used to justify the criminalization and overwhelmingly disproportionate imprisonment of blacks and Latinos. And those who get ensnared in the criminal "justice" system are for all intents and purposes branded for life.

Background checks have kept black and Latino men who have been victimized by the racist cops and courts, especially through the "war on drugs," out of the Metro workforce. Drug testing is conducted to harass and abuse workers. Body-art registration is a similar club in the hands of the bosses. Further, the Youth Justice Coalition has detailed that the state has shared data from CalGang with potential employers and even landlords. Who's to say information doesn't flow both ways?

Workers are angry that the leaders of the unions at Metro have not taken a strong stance against this assault. According to them, SMART—the new union issuing out of the merger of the bus and train drivers' United Transportation Union with the Sheet Metal Workers—is taking legal action against the company. The Amalgamated Transit Union, which represents mechanics and maintenance workers, has voiced its support for this action. In the meantime, the bureaucrats of all the Metro unions are telling their members to give the information the company wants when asked for it! Such slavish groveling before the bosses is the norm for these pro-capitalist labor bureaucrats. A union leadership worth its salt would direct workers not to comply and then defend the membership against any company reprisals. To fight company discrimination, what's really needed is union control of hiring. ■

Mariners' Museum, Newport News

Depiction of 19th-century slave trade. L.A. transit bosses threaten to bodily inspect workers in crackdown on tattoos and piercings.

TROTSKY

75th Anniversary of Founding of Fourth International

LENIN

We print below excerpts from the Fourth International's founding document, commonly known as the Transitional Program, adopted in September 1938 near Paris. Written by revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky during the Great Depression, the document continues to serve as a guide for Marxist intervention into class and social struggle, providing a bridge from the masses' immediate needs to the overthrow of the decaying capitalist system.

Classical Social Democracy, functioning in an epoch of progressive capitalism, divided its program into two parts independent of each other: the *minimum program*, which limited itself to reforms within the framework of bourgeois society, and the *maximum program*, which promised substitution of socialism for capitalism in the indefinite future. Between the minimum and the maximum program, no bridge existed....

The Fourth International does not discard the program of the old "minimal" demands to the degree to which these have preserved at least part of their vital forcefulness. Indefatigably, it defends the democratic rights and social conquests of the workers. But it carries on this day-to-day work within the framework of the correct actual, that is, revolutionary, perspective. Insofar as the old partial, "minimal" demands of the masses clash with the destructive and degrading tendencies of decadent capitalism—and this occurs at each step—the Fourth International advances a system of *transitional demands*, the essence of which is contained in the fact that ever more openly and decisively they will be directed against the very foundations of the bourgeois regime. The old "minimal program" is superseded by the *transitional program*, the task of which lies in systematic mobilization of the masses for the proletarian revolution....

Under the menace of its own disintegration, the proletariat cannot permit the transformation of an increasing section of the workers into chronically unemployed paupers, living off the crumbs of a disintegrating society. *The right to employment* is the only serious right left to the worker in a society based upon exploitation. This right today is being shorn from him at every step. Against unemployment, "structural" as well as "conjunctural," the time is ripe to advance, along with the slogan of public works, the slogan of *a sliding scale of working hours*. Trade unions and other mass organizations should bind the workers and the unemployed together in the solidarity of mutual responsibility. On this basis all the work on hand would then be divided among all existing workers in accordance with how the extent of the working week is defined. The average wage of every worker remains the same as it was under the old working week. Wages, with a strictly guaranteed *minimum*, would follow the movement of prices. It is impossible to accept any other program for the present catastrophic period.

Property owners and their lawyers will prove the "unrealizability" of these demands. Smaller, especially ruined capitalists in addition will refer to their account ledgers. The workers categorically denounce such conclusions and references. The question is not one of a "normal" collision between opposing material interests. The question is one of guarding the proletariat from decay, demoralization, and ruin. The question is one of life or death of the only creative and progressive class, and by that token of the future of mankind. If capitalism is incapable of satisfying the demands inevitably arising from the calamities generated by itself, then let it perish. "Realizability" or "unrealizability" is in the given instance a question of the relationship of forces, which can be decided only by the struggle. By means of this struggle, no matter what its immediate practical successes may be, the workers will best come to understand the necessity of liquidating capitalist slavery.

—Leon Trotsky, "The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International" (1938)

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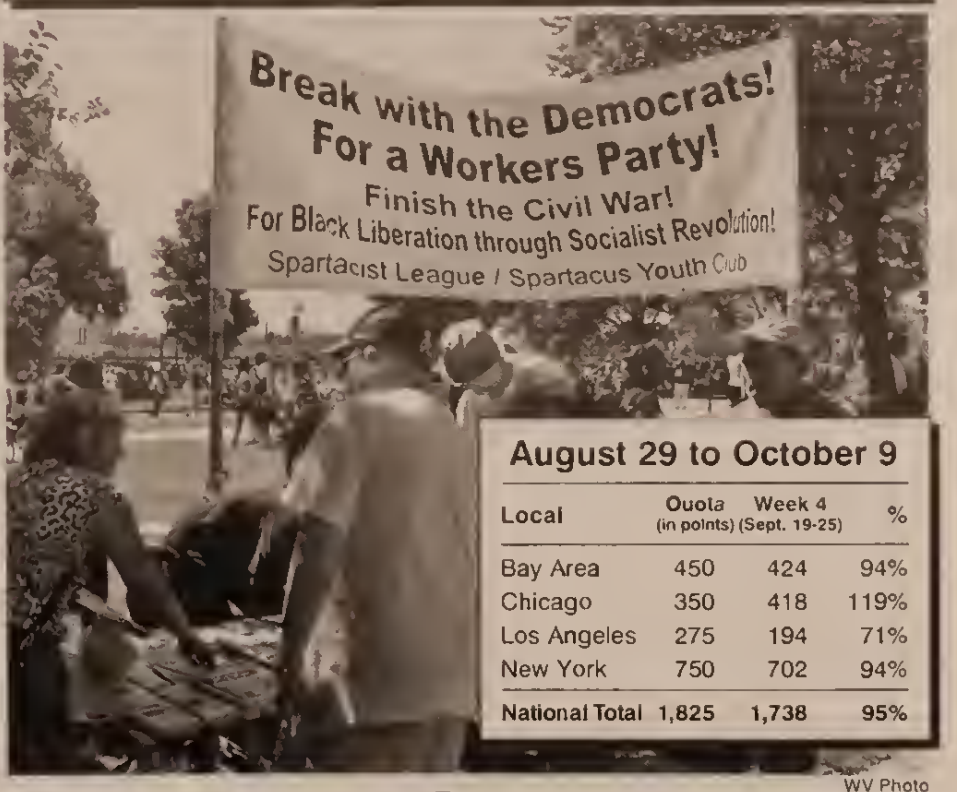

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No. 1031 **4 October 2013**

With the Islamists Sometimes, With Bourgeois Rule Always

How Egyptian Cliffites Covered for Military Coup

AP

Reuters

Left: Opponents of ousted Islamist president Mohamed Morsi flock around armored personnel carriers near Cairo's Tahrir Square on July 5, two days after military coup. Right: Victims of army massacre of Muslim Brotherhood supporters in Cairo suburb of Nasr City, July 8.

In a televised statement on July 3 announcing that the Egyptian Armed Forces had seized power, General Abdul Fattah el-Sisi stated that the military had been "called by the Egyptian people" to suspend the constitution and remove Islamist president Mohamed Morsi from office. In the ensuing two months, supporters of Morsi's reactionary Muslim Brotherhood who have demanded his reinstatement have been brutally suppressed by the military regime, with some 1,000 killed according to the *New York Times* (23 September). Both state forces and Islamist mobs have rampaged through Coptic Christian areas, expelling families and burning homes, churches and shops.

Military repression is also targeting trade unionists, leftist political activists and journalists. Haitham Mohamedain, a noted labor lawyer and spokesman for the Revolutionary Socialists (RS), the Egyptian affiliate of the late Tony Cliff's International Socialist Tendency, was arrested on September 5. Although he has been released, he remains under investigation for "leading and joining a secret organization called the Revolutionary Socialists" and "attempting to change the form of government by terrorist means." These Orwellian charges represent an attempt to criminalize any opposition to the military dictatorship. The workers movement internationally must demand: ***Hands off Haitham Mohamedain and the Revolutionary Socialists!***

Since the January 2011 upheaval that forced the removal of the despised strongman Hosni Mubarak, events in Egypt have been glowingly depicted as a revolution by all varieties of self-described socialists, especially the RS. The July 3 coup demonstrated the obvious: there has been no revolution. The masses that rose up in January-February 2011 sought a fundamental change to their conditions of poverty, brutal oppression and absence of democratic rights. But the dominant political forces in the anti-Mubarak upsurge and in subsequent protests have represented different variants of capitalist rule, from Nasserite nationalists and bourgeois liberals to the reactionary Muslim Brotherhood.

From Mubarak's last days in office through Morsi's presidency and today's military regime, the army, police and judiciary have remained intact (with a few changes at the top), enforcing capitalist dictates against workers and peasants and brutal repression against women and Copts. General Sisi himself was the director of military intelligence under Mubarak and head of the armed forces under Morsi. As Hugh Roberts explains in depth in "The Revolution That Wasn't" (*London Review of Books*, 12 September), the army, the source of political power in Egypt since 1952, had been marginalized by Mubarak but not displaced. "The events of January and February 2011 that brought it back to centre stage were not a revolution."

In an August 14 statement against military repression, the RS, which a year earlier had hailed Morsi's election, denounced "liberals and leftists" who acted "to whitewash the military and the counterrevolution. These people have blood on their hands." Indeed. And the reformist RS and its cothinkers in the U.S. International Socialist Organization (ISO) and the British Socialist Workers Party are prime examples. Shortly after the coup, RS spokesman Sameh Naguib wrote in the British *Socialist Worker* (5 July): "What has happened in Egypt is the height of democracy, a revolution of millions to directly topple the ruler. As for the military displacement of Mursi, this was nothing but a foregone conclusion, once the military institution saw that the masses had already settled the issue in the streets and squares of Egypt."

Tamarod and the Military: One Hand

As the *Wall Street Journal* (19 July) reported in a corrected version of an earlier article, in the months before the coup, military leaders told senior aides to Amr Moussa, Hamdeen Sabahy and Mohammed ElBaradei, leaders of the bourgeois National Salvation Front (NSF), that the military would oust Morsi if they could put enough protesters in the streets. The vehicle for this move turned out to be an organization called Tamarod (Rebellion), which was launched in April to initiate a petition demanding new presidential elections. Tamarod claimed the petition obtained 22 million signatures—millions more than the number of votes Morsi received in the 2012 election—and thus gave a popular mandate for his removal. In addition to the NSF and Coptic billionaire Naguib Sawiris, who helped finance the campaign, supporters of Tamarod included former officials from Mubarak's National Democratic Party...and the RS.

Bourgeois forces were propelled to embrace Tamarod by Morsi's failure to quell social struggle and shore up the collapsing economy, as well as by competition for the spoils of office. While the RS vaguely warned of the involvement of remnants of the Mubarak regime and bourgeois liberals, it nevertheless enthused over the petition campaign and especially the mass demonstrations on June 30. In an article carried in the U.S. *Socialist Worker* (27 June), Sameh Naguib raved: "The Tamarod (Rebellion) campaign has emerged after a period of retreat in the revolutionary movement to ignite the fuse of that movement on a national level heretofore unseen." He continued, "As for the revolutionaries, the goal of their participation in the Rebellion campaign and in the battles that will begin on June 30 is to reclaim the revolution" from the Islamists.

What soon became glaringly clear is that the protest movement, organized around the single demand for Morsi to leave office, served as the avenue for the military to reclaim direct power from the Islamists. Masses of people poured into the protests, galvanized by soaring inflation, unemployment, police repression, religious reaction and myriad other dire conditions that characterized life under Morsi's government. (They were also spurred on by sudden mysterious shortages of food and fuel—commodities that the military plays a key role in distributing.) But from the outset, the Tamarod campaign was premised on replacing one set of capitalist oppressors with another. At Tahrir Square, military planes flew overhead, showering demonstrators with Egyptian flags and bottled water.

In the U.S., Socialist Action's Jeff Mackler shamelessly claimed after the coup that "the revolutionaries who correctly supported, built, and participated in the June 30 mobilizations can hardly be held accountable for the results" (*CounterPunch*, 19 July). As if the protest organizers' intentions weren't clear! As Tamarod activist Mohamed Khamis told the London *Observer* (6 July), "The army did not take over power. They were merely a partner in the democratic change we were seeking." For their part, the RS opportunists, week after week, delicately refrained from describing the early July events as a coup even as they condemned military repression.

Morsi's Apostates

Since the outbreak of mass protests in early 2011, we have stressed the crucial need for Egypt's powerful working class to emerge as an independent political force at the head of all the downtrodden and oppressed—from women and Copts to urban slum dwellers and the rural poor. Waves of hitter, militant strikes by textile workers and others shook Egyptian society in the years leading up to Mubarak's ouster, and have continued since then. But the proletariat remains politically atomized and under the sway of bourgeois nationalism and religious forces. As we wrote when Mubarak was toppled:

> "Elementary democratic rights such as legal equality for women and the complete separation of religion and state; agrarian revolution to give land to the peasants; ending joblessness and grinding poverty: the basic aspirations of the masses cannot be met without the overthrow of the bonapartist capitalist order. The indispensable instrument for the working class to take the lead is a proletarian revolutionary party, which can be built only through relentless struggle against all bourgeois forces, from the military to the Brotherhood and the liberals who falsely claim to support the struggles of the masses."
>
> —"Egypt: Military Takeover Props Up Capitalist Rule," *WV* No. 974 (18 February 2011)

The entire political activity of the RS has been in opposition to this revolutionary perspective. Most of the reformist left internationally has preferred to tail various Nasserists and liberals, while the U.S. Workers World Party in the period following the July coup has praised the Muslim Brotherhood as "the germ of bourgeois democracy" (workersworld.org, 19 August). The RS and its British and American cothinkers have the dubious distinction of having supported *all* these class enemies of the workers and the poor.

Tony Cliff's international tendency has a sordid history of support to Islamic reaction, from celebrating the Ayatollah Khomeini's rise to power in Iran in 1979 to promoting the CIA-backed Afghan *mujahedin*'s holy war against the Soviet Union in the 1980s. In 1994, the Cliffite journal *International Socialism* published an extensive article "The Prophet and the Proletariat" by Chris Harman that provided

continued on page 11

Egyptian Presidency

June 2012: Following his inauguration, then president Morsi receives military's highest honor from Field Marshal General Hussein Tantawi, leader of military regime after ouster of dictator Hosni Mubarak.

Young Spartacus

Defend Anti-Petraeus Protesters!

New York City

On September 17, the cops brutally attacked a demonstration at the City University of New York (CUNY) against the appointment of war criminal David Petraeus as visiting professor. Six black and Latino protesters were arrested, detained overnight, and slapped with a range of trumped-up charges including "riot." The delegate assembly of the Professional Staff Congress, a union representing CUNY faculty and staff, passed a September 19 resolution denouncing the cop repression and calling for the charges against the protesters to be dropped. Students, faculty and campus workers must defend the CUNY 6, and all those who oppose the crimes of U.S. imperialism, against bourgeois state repression. ***Drop all charges against the CUNY 6!***

The demonstration, called by the Ad Hoc Committee Against the Militarization of CUNY, was held outside a fund-raiser attended by the former CIA director General Petraeus at CUNY's Macaulay Honors College. Videos filmed on the scene show an NYPD supervisor grabbing a protester and slamming him into a parked car as two other officers pile on top and other cops swarm the street, chasing protesters. Another video shows police holding down and repeatedly kidney punching another protester.

The media has gone on a violence-baiting smear campaign against the CUNY protesters and in defense of this war criminal. In an ominous statement released on September 20, CUNY's interim chancellor William P. Kelly issued a thinly veiled endorsement of the police repression and an implicit threat against the protesters, vowing to put a stop to so-called "obstruction" and "harassment" of Petraeus. ***CUNY: Hands off faculty and student pratesters! Na reprisals!***

Jefferson Siegel

Four of the arrested CUNY 6 protesters with attorney (right) in Manhattan Criminal Court, September 18.

Outrageously, the press and CUNY administration have invoked the notion that Petraeus's right to free speech as a professor has been violated. But this is not a question of "academic freedom" for some bourgeois ideologue. We want students, teachers and workers to drive Petraeus off campus through protest and exposure—***not far his palitical views, but for his deeds*** in overseeing torture and mass murder in Iraq, Afghanistan, Latin America and elsewhere. We are also in favor of protests aimed at shutting down the Reserve Officers Training Corps (see "ROTC Off Campus!" *WV* No. 1029, 6 September).

While the Spartacus Youth Club defends these protesters, we also maintain our criticisms of the politics of the Ad Hoc Committee, as expressed in our press and at the multiple CUNY protests in which we have participated. This group, led by the fake-Trotskyist Internationalist Group (IG) and the Maoist Revolutionary Student Coordinating Committee (RSCC), is an opportunist bloc that does not mention—let alone oppose—the current ruling party of imperialist war, namely the Democrats, in any of its published statements. While the RSCC claims to be anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist, it offers no opposition to the Democratic Party anywhere in its Points of Unity, Platform or published articles. The IG is only too happy to ditch its paper opposition to the Democrats for the sake of joint statements of unity with liberals and reformists.

For Marxists, the starting point for a program to defeat U.S. imperialism is opposition to the capitalist ruling class and its parties. As a speaker for the SYC stated in his speech during the Ad Hoc Committee's September 3 protest, "The Democrats are simply the other party of racism and war. We say break with the Democrats! No support to Obama. We need a workers party that fights for socialist revolution!"

The next court hearing is scheduled for October 17 at the New York Criminal Court, 100 Centre Street, time to be announced. Protest letters can be sent to Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance Jr., One Hogan Place, New York, NY 10013. We reprint below the SYC's September 21 protest letter to the Manhattan D.A. We note that the last name of one of the arrested protesters, Rafael Peña, was misspelled in the court record and thus also in our protest letter.

* * *

The New York Spartacus Youth Club (SYC) denounces the police assault on those protesting ex-CIA head General David Petraeus outside CUNY Macaulay Honors College on September 17th. Six protesters, Jose Disla, Denise Ford, Rafael Pena, Luis Henriquez, Agustin Castro and Angelica Hernandez, were arrested. We demand that all charges be dropped immediately!

During the protest, the NYPD viciously punched and slammed protesters to the pavement. One was held down by officers and repeatedly pummeled.

The context for this police attack was several recent protests against Petraeus teaching at Macaulay Honors College and against the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) returning to CUNY campuses. For voicing their opposition, the six protesters face trumped up charges, including riot in the second degree, obstruction of governmental administration and resisting arrest, among others. The SYC stands in solidarity with the CUNY 6. We demand that all charges be dropped!

War on Workers...

(continued from page 1)

with decent health coverage—a key gain of labor battles of the past that has been under attack for years—now face the threat of massive cutbacks of those plans by bosses screaming even louder that they can't afford the costs. Secondly, when the health care law comes fully into effect in January 2015, firms with 50 or more full-time employees will be required to offer "affordable" health insurance or pay a fine. So many of these companies are simply slashing work hours to under 30 per week.

Thirdly, the law threatens health plans sponsored by more than one employer, which are typically negotiated by unions in industries dominated by small businesses, such as construction, retail and restaurants. A major reason that workers in these industries are attracted to unions is the existence of such health plans—800,000 of the 1.3 million members of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) are covered in this way. Under the ACA, low-income workers covered by plans on the new health insurance exchanges will be eligible for federal subsidies. However, unionized workers covered by multi-employer plans will not qualify for subsidies. That whets employers' appetite to drop coverage when existing collective bargaining agreements expire and put their workers on the exchanges. And by caving in to such attacks, the labor misleaders further undermine the unions.

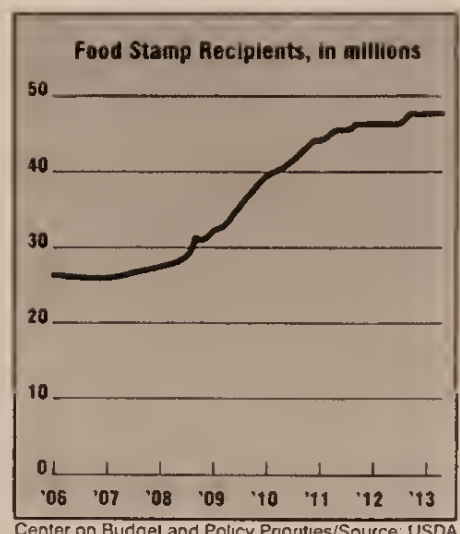
In July, the leaders of the Teamsters, the UFCW and UNITE HERE, which organizes hotel and restaurant workers, sent a letter to the leaders of the Congressional Democrats, Senator Harry Reid and Representative Nancy Pelosi, protesting that the ACA will "shatter not only our hard-earned health benefits, but destroy the foundation of the 40 hour work week." When a resolution calling for repeal of the ACA in its current form looked set to pass at the AFL-CIO convention on September 11, the White House strong-armed the labor burcaucrats into passing a watered-down resolution that simply called for changes to the law. Two days later, Obama called AFL-CIO president Richard Trumka and other union tops to the White House and told them that any idea of protecting multi-employer health plans was dead in the water.

In their letter to Reid and Pelosi, the union officials recalled their endless efforts and financial contributions to help elect Democratic politicians as well as their enthusiastic support to Obama's health care law when it was initially proposed. What is needed is some actual labor struggle—including strike action—to fight the companies that are trying to steal workers' benefits.

Working people and everyone else need ***free, quality health care***—a demand that runs straight up against the profit-gouging corporations that are at the core of the U.S. health care system. The unions would find plenty of allies if they waged some hard class struggle for health care, for black and immigrant rights and access to free abortion and contraception. But such battles pose the need to replace the labor sellouts, who peddle the lie that the workers have interests in common with their exploiters, with a leadership committed to mobilizing workers power in opposition to the class enemy. What's needed is to build a workers party that calls to expropriate the health care industries as part of the fight to overturn the capitalist order though socialist revolution.

Coates/Detroit News

September 2012: Workers at Detroit waste water treatment plant walk off job to protest job slashing.



Center on Budget and Policy Priorities/Source: USDA

Capitalist economic crisis has left one-sixth of U.S. population reliant on food stamps.

Whom the Gods Would Destroy They First Make Mad

The liberal *New York Times* economics maven Paul Krugman speaks for a good

Katrina Racist Nightmare Lives On

Danziger Bridge Killer Cops Get New Trial

Brandon/Times-Picayune

Days after Hurricane Katrina, cops arrest Lance Madison at Danziger Bridge, where they shot six people, killing two including Madison's brother.

On September 17, a federal court granted a new trial to five New Orleans Police Department (NOPD) officers incarcerated for their role in one of the most notorious killings by cops in recent memory: the shootings at Danziger Bridge in September 2005, a few days after Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans. The ruling by U.S. District Judge Kurt Engelhardt, who presided over the original 2011 trial, opens a pathway for the convicted killers and a key accomplice in the subsequent cover-up to walk out of prison while awaiting another trial—if federal prosecutors decide to pursue a new trial at all. The five are serving terms ranging from six to 65 years. Coming just two months after the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the coldblooded killing of Trayvon Martin, the federal court decision is another reminder of just how cheap black life is in this racist capitalist society.

The incident at Danziger Bridge is emblematic of the nightmare for New Orleans' black and poor population that unfolded in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. As city officials ranted against mythical black looters and rapists, cops and white vigilantes were given the green light to go on a killing spree. Black Democratic mayor Ray Nagin directed the NOPD's second-in-command to "stop search and rescue and bring our force back to controlling the streets." The *Times-Picayune* (12 December 2009) reported that "in the week after Katrina, New Orleans police killed and wounded as many people as they do in a typical year." Among them were two killed and four wounded at Danziger Bridge.

At 9 a.m. on 4 September 2005, a truckload of officers raced to the bridge in response to a police call that falsely reported people shooting at cops near the Industrial Canal. Jumping from their vehicle, the cops opened fire, including with AK-47s, on clusters of unarmed people crossing the bridge in a desperate search for food and water. Ronald Madison, a 40-year-old severely disabled man, was killed by a blast in the back of the head from a shotgun fired at close range by Robert Faulcon, the only black cop among the crew. Madison's brother Lance was then arrested on frame-up charges of shooting at the cops. Seventeen-year-old James Brissette was also killed, and four members of a family accompanying him were gravely injured. At the trial, several officers taking the stand as part of plea bargains testified to the ensuing cover-up, which included fabricated witnesses, a planted gun and falsified reports.

Engelhardt's ruling did not contest these facts but rather cited prosecutorial misconduct. Specifically, he contended that anonymous postings (some disparaging the police) on the Web site NOLA.com by individuals associated with the prosecution had created a "prejudicial, poisonous atmosphere" requiring a new trial. As a *Washington Post* (21 September) editorial noted, "By that logic, overturning the convictions might also be justified by the TV show 'Treme' which...depicts the New Orleans police as corrupt, brutal and violent." The fact is that ***the whole world*** saw the venality and brutality of the thugs in blue in daily news broadcasts at the time.

What happened at Danziger Bridge was an especially depraved expression of the murderous racist violence meted out daily by police in upholding the American capitalist order. Three days before Engelhardt's decision, police in Charlotte, North Carolina, gunned down Jonathan Ferrell, a 24-year-old former Florida A&M football player. Ferrell had recently moved to the city to join his fiancée and was working two jobs and preparing to go back to school. When his car ran off the road in the early morning, he crawled out of the back window and sought help at the first house he found. A woman who opened the door shut it quickly and called the police. Moments after they arrived, Ferrell lay dead, hit by ten bullets. The next day, Randall Kerrick was arraigned on voluntary manslaughter charges, the first time in 30 years that a Charlotte cop was charged for an on-duty shooting. In the rare instances of such cases going to trial, the courts almost always let cops off on the grounds that they were just "doing their job."

Hurricane Katrina provided dramatic evidence of a ruling class that could not care less whether the impoverished black masses live or die. Many people recall with horror the images of thousands of desperate survivors begging for help from rooftops and bodies floating by on floodwaters. Dying victims, packed into the sweltering Superdome, lacked food, water and medicine. Another measure of the rulers' racist contempt and class arrogance is that there is still no final casualty count for the hurricane. Officially, the death toll directly attributable to the storm is around 1,800 for Louisiana and Mississippi, with a majority of the victims black. However, hundreds are still missing, with many bodies unclaimed or unidentified.

In the first six months of 2006, there were over 2,300 more deaths than usual in the New Orleans area, in part due to a skyrocketing suicide rate. Meanwhile, the capitalist class sought to whiten the city's face, taking advantage of the catastrophe to raze public housing, shut down schools, especially in black areas, and bust city unions. In 2007, the Director of the New Orleans Health Department reported that there were 75 percent fewer hospital beds and 70 percent fewer doctors in black areas of the city, which had already suffered from grossly inadequate health care before the storm.

Hurricane Katrina was a natural disaster. But the social disaster that followed was man-made, a product of the racial oppression that is built into the American capitalist system. First enslaved, then forcibly segregated, marginalized and imprisoned by the hundreds of thousands, the black population remains an oppressed race-color caste. But they are not powerless. As an integral component of the proletariat, doubly oppressed black workers will be at the forefront of the socialist revolution that will sweep away murderous racist capitalism and its police enforcers.■

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section of the U.S. ruling class when he derides the Republican Party today as "the crazy party." But there is a reason for the seeming madness.

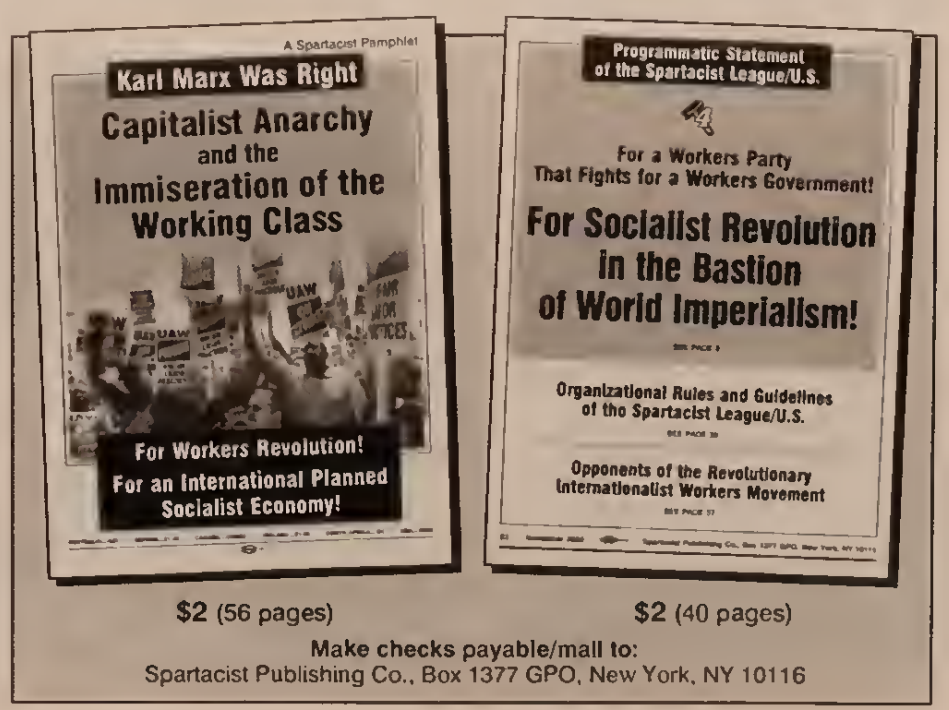
In 1991-92, the U.S. and other imperialist powers achieved a decades-long strategic goal with the destruction of the Soviet Union—the world's first workers state—through capitalist counterrevolution. The anti-Soviet campaign imposed a certain disciplined class unity between the Democrats and Republicans, whatever their particular policy differences. In the post-Soviet world, the U.S. bourgeoisie emerged as the unchallenged dominant power. But even as the U.S. achieved unrivaled military supremacy, its domestic industrial base has continued to corrode. To some in the haughty ruling class, the decline of the country's economic might is bereft of any explanation—besides being contrary to "God's will." This section of the bourgeoisie found expression in the presidency of George W. Bush.

The capitalist rulers achieved a degree of national unity with their "war on terror" following the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Later that unity was frayed as U.S. imperialism remained mired in the occupations of Afghanistan and especially Iraq. While slaughtering hundreds of thousands of those countries' peoples, the U.S. rulers found themselves in a quagmire under the leadership of an increasingly discredited and deeply unpopular president. It was the task of the Obama presidency to extricate the U.S. from those occupations and focus on other world targets (like China) while continuing and extending the Bush administration's attacks on democratic rights and living standards at home. But as the recent events around Syria show, extricating the U.S. from its Near East morass is not easy.

For five years the Obama administration has presided over increasing immiseration and cuts in social programs benefiting the poor, attacks on labor and women. When the big banks and auto companies faced crippling losses as a result of the 2008 financial crisis, they were showered with government subsidies to the tune of hundreds of billions of dollars. The 2009 contracts that the United Auto Workers bureaucracy helped force down the throats of workers at General Motors, Ford and Chrysler threw thousands of them on the scrap heap and slashed wages for new hires in half, opening the floodgates for further attacks on unions throughout the country. Today, the largely black and impoverished population of Detroit—the city ruined by the Big Three automakers and Wall Street banks—gets peanuts from Washington.

Nearly 47 million people—fully 15 percent of the U.S. population—are today living in poverty. The unemployment rate, which stands at 7.3 percent, has fallen incrementally in recent months, due almost entirely to workers taking part-time or poverty-level jobs or simply giving up on looking for work. Meanwhile, corporate profits last year, as a share of the economy, were the highest since World War II.

What Krugman and other liberals portray as the madness of the Tea Party Republicans is merely an extreme expression of the unbridled greed and arrogance of the capitalist ruling class. When Congress and the White House were wrangling over the debt ceiling two years ago, we wrote in "We Need an All-New Ruling Class—The Workers!" (*WV* No. 985, 2 September 2011): "Just as the decadent, crazed and corrupt court of the tsars was swept away by the Russian Revolution, we Marxists are determined to build the revolutionary internationalist party that can lead the workers in overthrowing the decaying rule of American capitalism."■



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Traditional Courts Bill: Dire Threat to Women

South African Government Promotes Reactionary Tribal Leaders

The following article originally appeared in Spartacist South Africa *No. 9 (Winter 2013), newspaper of the South African section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).*

In December 2011, the government introduced a new Traditional Courts Bill. The bill would give traditional leaders, headed by tribal chiefs, unchallenged legal power over 17 million rural black inhabitants, who are balkanised according to tribal background along the same lines promoted under apartheid. Chiefs would get increased powers to make laws, decide cases and hand down punishment—including evictions and forced unpaid labour—often with no possibility for appeal.

The biggest losers under this bill are black women, the "slaves of the slaves," who already suffer from grinding poverty and triple oppression. Backward traditional practices oppressive to women are widespread—from *lobola* [bride price], forced polygamy and *ukuthwala* (marriage by capture) to virginity testing, all of which are reinforced by the traditional leaders. Women are commonly denied the right to represent themselves in the traditional courts, and forced to be represented by their husbands or other male family members.

GCIS

South African president Jacob Zuma accompanies tribal chiefs at National House of Traditional Leaders, November 2012.

After the bourgeois parliament discussed the Traditional Courts Bill in late

SPARTACIST SOUTH AFRICA

2012, misinformation reports were spread by the ANC [African National Congress] and the government saying that the bill had been withdrawn. This method is commonly used to defuse anger against particularly unpopular new laws (similar tricks were tried with the Protection of State Information Bill, which has now been passed). The fact is that the Traditional Courts Bill is now being reviewed by the provincial governments and pushing it through is still very much on the agenda of the ANC/SACP/COSATU [ANC/South African Communist Party/Congress of South African Trade Unions] Tripartite Alliance government.

The bill is part of the increased state repression which has been deployed in response to mounting social unrest. In order to administer the neo-apartheid capitalist system, the leaders of the Alliance are compelled to reach for the same weapons that were previously used by their own apartheid butchers. The government led by President Jacob Zuma, in particular, has relied on stoking poisonous tribal sentiments and anti-immigrant chauvinism, while sharpening the most repressive tools of the state—massacres of strikers, police brutality, de facto states of emergency, etc. The strengthening of the chiefs, tribal divisions, and traditional backwardness is part of the package of neo-apartheid rule.

The bill also underlines the lesson that national liberation struggles led by petty-bourgeois and bourgeois nationalists are incapable of ensuring real and lasting rights for women. Throughout its 101-year history, the programme and policies of the ANC have been guided by the basic aim of fostering a black capitalist layer which could participate in exploiting "its own people"—a task which they did not want to leave solely to the white and foreign capitalists. The interpenetration of the ANC leadership with the chiefs and other traditional leaders has been a key part of this programme, and a clear indicator that this party represents the class enemy of the liberation of workers, women, and the oppressed black majority in general.

Just look at Mandla Mandela, a grandson of Nelson Mandela and ANC member of parliament. As chief of the Mvezo traditional council in the Eastern Cape, he has become notorious for using this position to enrich his family and suppress criticism or challenges, all the while promoting the most hideous backwardness to shore up his despotic reign. For example, in 2010 he officially defended the barbaric "culture" of kidnapping women (particularly young girls) known as *ukuthwala*, telling a parliamentary committee on rural development and land reform, "for a girl to be taken as a wife through ukuthwala—the process has nothing to do with age—When you are going to discuss culture do not even try to bring in white notions as such an approach will turn things upside down." In 2011, three of Mandla Mandela's "subjects" in Mvezo took him to court after he ordered their eviction from their ancestral gravesite to make way for capitalist developers to build a hotel and stadium.

Bourgeois-nationalist ideology has always relegated women to being "baby-makers" and servants of men. The capitalists and their lackeys are the enemies of women's liberation. As revolutionary Marxists, atheists and fighters for women's liberation, we fiercely oppose the Traditional Courts Bill. We seek to link the fight against this reactionary bill to the necessary broader struggle against the whole system of capitalist exploitation. The struggle for women's liberation is inseparable from the struggle for socialist revolution, and both require a fight to break the working class from the influence of bourgeois nationalism as part of forging a Leninist party to act as a tribune of the people. The working class as a whole has a vital interest in stopping this reactionary bill, which will also be used to further clamp down on any struggle against the neo-apartheid capitalist order.

ZUMA Press

Women carrying roofing thatch in KwaZulu-Natal, 2006. Enshrining power of tribal chiefs further reinforces social oppression and backwardness.

Tribal Chiefs: Tools of Racist Capitalist Oppression

Life in the former bantustans is hell for the black masses, especially women, and the traditional leaders play a central role enforcing this misery and keeping the population in check. Research conducted by the Rural Women's Movement has uncovered cases in rural villages of KwaZulu-Natal where parents are forced to pay R1,000 [$100] or a cow to the tribal chief as a fine for their daughter falling pregnant out of wedlock; where traditional leaders deprive families of the "right" to bury loved ones because of such unpaid fines; and where many other instances of despotic abuse run rampant, including imposition of endless arbitrary "taxes" to fund traditional leaders' parasitic lifestyles.

One of the most brutally oppressive, backward practices perpetrated against women in the name of tradition is female genital mutilation (FGM), also known as female circumcision. It is often found alongside male circumcision in societies where cultures attempt to make sharp gender/sexual distinctions as children reach puberty, and it continues to be practiced in rural parts of South Africa, although the government does not acknowledge its existence. FGM is a heinous crime against women, which must be categorically and unconditionally opposed. In contrast, male circumcision, when performed under safe medical conditions, is a procedure that is vastly less deforming. Yet every year in South Africa, scores of young boys die as a result of botched circumcisions at traditional initiation schools. This highlights the tribal leaders' bitter hostility to Western medical advances and the cheapness of black life. This year in May, over 20 boys died in just one week in Mpumalanga province. The ANC's provincial minister for "health," Matshego Dlamini, grotesquely justified this, explaining her refusal to intervene by saying, "This is a tradition; as a woman I cannot go; if they are dead or not, it is a tradition"!

The chieftaincy is a bastion of reaction, a remnant of pre-capitalist society which survived through widespread collaboration with the former colonial and apartheid rulers. Throughout Southern

Africa, the chiefs fight tooth and nail to deny women abortion and other basic democratic rights. There is a large overlap between the chieftaincy and the ruling ANC. This helps the chiefs increase their power and wealth, while the chiefs in turn are an important part of repressing the rural black population and delivering them as voting cattle to the ANC.

Defending the Traditional Courts Bill during a speech to the National House of Traditional Leaders in November 2012, Zuma lashed out at black intellectuals who have been critical of the bill: "Some Africans who become too clever take a position (where) they become the most eloquent in criticising themselves about their own traditions and everything." Zuma, whose government just a few months earlier had carried out the massacre of 34 striking black mineworkers in defence of the profits of London-based Lonmin Platinum, demagogically intoned, "Let us solve African problems the African way, not the white man's way." In fact, the Traditional Courts Bill stands very much in the tradition of the white rulers—from British imperialists in the colonial period, to the Afrikaner nationalists during apartheid—who seized upon and reinforced the most retrogressive aspects of tribal and traditional culture as a means of propping up their rule and amassing profits from the blood and sweat of the black masses.

A prime example is the Native Administration Act of 1927, which created civil, divorce, appeal and high courts under

Torgovnik/NY Times

June 2012: Tribal court in session in village of Manhlaneni.

tion of the surrounding black states to labour colonies for South Africa's mines, factories and farms. Thousands of workers, maimed for life while toiling for the white ruling class, were dumped back on the bantustans. The full brunt of this system was borne by the women relegated to the unspeakably destitute "homelands."

The migrant labour system and the superexploitation of mainly black labour remain at the foundation of the capitalist system in the "new South Africa," but now with the ANC-led Tripartite Alliance government acting as the black overseers for the still predominantly white capitalist rulers. This fact, and the role of the tra-

AFP

August 2012: A day after police massacred striking miners at Marikana, women from surrounding shantytowns protested outside Lonmin platinum mine.

control of the tribal headmen and chiefs, reinforcing and imposing tribal divisions on the black population. That act codified the minority status assigned to women by traditional customs, declaring: "A Black woman...who is a partner in a customary union and who is living with her husband, shall be deemed to be a minor and her husband shall be deemed to be her guardian." This was part of a notorious series of laws enacted by the British rulers as they went about entrenching the migrant labour system—the Masters and Servants Act, the Natives' Land Acts beginning in 1913, the Urban Areas Act, and various Pass Laws and Poll Taxes, all of which served to dispossess blacks of their land and create a pool of cheap black labour with no rights.

After coming to power in the 1948 elections, the National Party government would fine-tune this racist system and take it to new extremes under apartheid. As noted in "'One Chief, One Vote': The Revival of Traditional Authorities in Post-Apartheid South Africa" (*African Affairs*, 1997): "The African reserves in the countryside played a crucial role in the government's efforts to establish tighter control over African labour.... In the African villages, the administration of the pass book and the running of the labour bureaux, where permits had to be annually renewed, were the responsibility of the chief."

The heart of apartheid was the migratory labour system, the reduction of South African blacks to dispossessed foreigners within their own country and the reduditional leaders in this system, was highlighted by David van Wyk, a researcher for the Bench Marks Foundation, who noted in an interview with *Amandla!* (September 2012): "An Angloplats personnel manager told me that they're using local councillors and chiefs as recruitment officers. A woman who tells me that she went for five interviews and at each interview she was asked for sex and at each interview she refused and every time she didn't get the job. [It's like] what they said about post-colonial Kenya, that 'contracts are signed on the thighs of women'."

As communists, we seek to eradicate the inherently racist migratory labour system. This would mean on the one hand massive investment to promote the economic and social development of the rural areas here and in neighbouring countries. It also would involve a major programme to provide quality, affordable housing for all in the cities and other areas where industry is currently concentrated, including adequate housing for workers and their families to live comfortably. The capitalists and their government are not going to do any of this, because it does not serve their class interests. What's needed is a black-centred workers government, part of a socialist federation of Southern Africa, to build a socialist planned economy in which production is organised to serve the interests of the majority rather than the profits of a filthy rich minority.

The COSATU leaders have never fundamentally challenged the migrant labour system or its counterpart, South Africa's "domestic service" for African women who have made it out of the desolation of the rural areas. This is no accident—it flows from their treacherous class-collaborationist politics, which chain the working class to the bourgeois-nationalist ANC via the Tripartite Alliance. A fight against the migrant labour system is going to take a political struggle against the class-collaborationist trade union tops.

Eradicating the migrant labour system is also intimately connected to the land question, a burning issue at the centre of the dispossession of the non-white majority. A century after the Natives' Land Act of 1913, the white minority still owns more than 70 percent of urban and arable rural land. We are for the expropriation of the large, white-owned farms and for their transformation into collective and state farms under workers rule. Much of the remaining land in the rural areas is now under the control of the tribal chiefs as a result of the Communal Land Rights Act of 2004, which gave them control over the land of their subjects. A black-centred workers government would put an end to the privileges and power of these rural despots.

At the ANC's founding in 1912 (initially as the South African Native National Congress), a considerable number of the delegates were tribal chiefs, leading to the creation of an "Upper House" to accommodate traditional leaders who joined the organisation. Along with the intellectuals, lawyers and other representatives of the black petty-bourgeoisie who formed the ANC, the chiefs' main concern was begging the British colonial rulers to grant them a privileged position as black aristocracy within the system of white capitalist rule. For example, at the 1912 founding, one of the five basic aims outlined for the organisation was to "promote understanding between chiefs, and loyalty to the British crown and all lawful authorities and to promote understanding between white and black South Africans"!

The ANC would later adopt a more populist stance aimed at attracting mass support, exemplified by the 1955 Freedom Charter, a bourgeois-populist programme. This was in large part a result of the white rulers' refusal to grant even the most minimal concessions, instead increasing repression of any independent black political activity, including banning the ANC and other black-nationalist organisations by the early 1960s. At the same time, the apartheid rulers sought to co-opt the tribal chiefs and use them to police the black population through the hated bantustan system. For the most part, the chiefs were willing collaborators, a fact which led to significant hostility toward the chiefs among the base of the ANC-led Congress movement and other wings of the anti-apartheid movement.

Some of the sharpest expressions of this hostility occurred during the 1980s, at the same time as massive strikes by the black trade unions and township revolts rocked the country. But the ANC leaders' calls to "make the country ungovernable" were never intended to launch a struggle to overthrow the hated apartheid rulers; rather, the nationalist leaders were cynically exploiting the militancy of the masses in a bid to *pressure* the white rulers into a negotiated settlement. At the same time, they sought to mend ties with the traditional leaders who had collaborated with the National Party government, trying to give them "liberation" credentials by creating a mythology about the tribal chiefs' resistance to apartheid. In 1987, the ANC launched CONTRALESA (Congress of Traditional Leaders) as an organisation of "progressive" tribal chiefs, hailing this as "the chiefs coming back to the people." Since coming to power in 1994 following the deal with the white rulers, the Tripartite Alliance government has been in charge of maintaining the same profit system as before. They have inherited the structures that existed during apartheid.

Women's Oppression, Tradition and the Family

As part of administering neo-apartheid capitalist misery, the ANC and other Alliance leaders also romanticise tribal societies, including conciliating and promoting *izangoma* (witchdoctors) and other quacks who are euphemistically referred to as "traditional healers." The disastrous state of the public health care system—with public hospitals chronically overcrowded, understaffed and decrepit, if you can even make it to one—means that traditional healers are the only "health care" many ever see. Some women go to them for abortions because legal abortions in hospitals are not accessible. We stand for women's right to free, safe abortions on demand. We defend science and science-based medicine against "traditional medicine" *muti* and other so-called "alternative medicine," opposing government subsidies or other promotion of traditional healers.

The disastrous effects of the bourgeois nationalists' promotion of traditional backwardness were shown horrifically by the "AIDS denialist" policy of the Thabo Mbeki government (a policy in which Zuma, Mbeki's deputy until 2005, as well as the leaders of the SACP and COSATU, were complicit for years before later distancing themselves). A Harvard School of Public Health study showed that some 330,000 South Africans died of AIDS between 2000 and 2005 because a timely antiretroviral (ARV) treatment programme was not implemented. The meagre aid which the profit-driven imperialist system rationed out to Southern Africa was further obstructed, as Mbeki and other ANC leaders rejected medical science and actively blocked the implementation of an ARV programme, instead promoting traditional healers and other merchants of death pushing herbal and "natural" cures. Because

continued on page 8

James Nachtwey

Women marked with supermarket stickers used to indicate "authenticated" Zulu virgins, 2001.

South Africa...

(continued from page 7)

HIV/AIDS is a sexually-transmitted disease, its spread has always been fueled by the subordinate position of women. We always opposed the deadly "denialist" quackery, and we continue to demand free ARVs for all who need them as part of the struggle for free, quality health care for all.

Besides their role in furthering ignorance, promoting anti-scientific prejudices and superstition, the traditional healers are part of the repressive political structure that runs from the community *sangoma* [traditional healer] straight up to the House of Traditional Leaders, which is part of the bourgeois state. A primary function of that repressive structure is to enforce the subordination of women to men. This is done through promoting and legitimising anti-woman, patriarchal practices. Along with *lobola* and *ukuthwala*, this includes virginity testing and initiation ceremonies like *uMemolo*, where young women are taught subservience to men and how to be the bearers of traditional culture to the next generation.

These backward traditional practices are remnants from an agricultural and slave culture. They are a big factor in legitimising and promoting violence against women, including some of the highest recorded rape statistics in the world. It is the most vulnerable women who suffer most under these practices. For example, the thugs who practice *ukuthwala* usually kidnap women who are orphans or come from poor families. As always in class society, the traditions and culture which are upheld most vehemently are those which are acceptable and beneficial to the wealthy.

Strengthening the traditional courts means strengthening this repression of women. In many systems of customary law, African women fall under the guardianship of their fathers or, after marriage, their husbands. They have no contractual capacity without consent of their guardian and are not allowed to appear in court without the assistance of their guardian. They are excluded from political processes of the tribe and are sometimes precluded from obtaining land rights. Traditionally women are not included in *lobola* negotiations; sexual consent and other sexual rights belong to family members rather than the women themselves.

A common misconception is that women's subordination to men, like the patriarchal family of today, have always existed. Another misconception, particularly prevalent among feminists and others who oppose women's oppression from a bourgeois-liberal framework, is that the source of women's oppression is simply backward patriarchal ideas (mainly those of men). On the other hand, nationalists in particular apologise for forced polygamy, *lobola* and other anti-woman practices, romanticising them as uniquely African ways of showing "respect" between families. Another justification for these things argues that since women are often accorded prominent positions in traditional African practices, they can't be oppressive to women.

As Marxists we understand that women's oppression is material and that the view of women as inferior to men is a reflection of that material reality. Engels explained that women's oppression is rooted in the development of private property and the division of society into classes, both of which are tied to the development of the family. Early human societies lived in a form of "primitive communism." This meant humans hunted and gathered the bare minimum in order to survive, and shared this equally. The division of labour between men and women was based on the biological reality of childcare—i.e. women were responsible for bearing and nursing of the young—and implied no subordinate social status for women. The division of labour between the sexes was equal, both worked to produce the necessities of life. The functions of the household were a communal and collective responsibility.

Laurie Bloomfield

Durban, 1959: Apartheid police attack women in Cato Manor protesting crackdown on home beer brewing.

This primitive social equality was overthrown when advances like the development of agriculture enabled humans to produce more than the bare minimum needed to survive. This social surplus became the property of a minority, which were men, creating the first class divisions in society. This led to the development of the institution of the family as a means of passing ownership of property from one generation to the next. It also gave rise to the state, an organisation of dominance used by one class to suppress another.

The patriarchal family decreed monogamy for women so that men could ensure that their offspring inherited their property. This put an end to the communal family. Therefore family functions, raising children and household labour, became private and lost their public character. Women, confined to the individual home, became isolated from social production, which became a male sphere. As Engels wrote in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1884): "The overthrow of mother-right was the *world historical defeat of the female sex*. The man took command in the home also; the woman was degraded and reduced to servitude; she became the slave of his lust and a mere instrument for the production of children."

So what is the role of the monogamous family for people who have no property to pass down? The family under capitalism also serves to rear the next generation to work on the land, in the factories and mines, and to serve as cannon fodder in the bourgeois army. It serves to train youth to obey authority, inculcates religious backwardness and generally acts as an ideological brake on social consciousness. In this way the institution of the family ensures the maintenance of class rule for the capitalists. It is the main source of women's oppression, an economic and social unit which is a mainstay of social reaction along with organised religion. It is also at the root of discrimination, legal persecution and other oppression of homosexuals. Despite liberal laws on paper, anti-gay bigotry is virulent in South Africa, with regular reports of murderous attacks against gays and lesbians, particularly in the townships and rural areas.

Unlike the feminists, who view women's liberation as a task of women only, we understand that the fight for women's equality must be taken up as a necessary part of the struggle to liberate the working class as a whole. This includes fighting to integrate women into social production. The trade unions must fight for free, 24-hour childcare to be available for all; for the extension of maternity leave rights for working women; for free access to birth control and free, safe abortions on demand; and for other demands to give women greater access to decent jobs and financial independence.

Fighting for these demands requires a political struggle to replace the current pro-capitalist trade union leaders—who, in the case of the COSATU leaders, directly subordinate the working class to the capitalists via the Tripartite Alliance nationalist popular front—with a class-struggle leadership. Struggling against the pro-capitalist union misleaders is a crucial part of the necessary fight to forge a revolutionary vanguard party. We want to open the way for women to play an active and leading role in the working class, which uniquely has the social power and objective interest to overthrow the capitalist system.

Especially in countries of belated capitalist development like South Africa, the fight for women's liberation can be a powerful motor force for socialist revolution. South Africa never experienced a bourgeois-democratic revolution. Instead, capitalist oppression was imposed by the imperialist colonisers on top of pre-capitalist societies, leaving in place and reinforcing all the accumulated backwardness of those societies, particularly brutal oppression of women. We oppose the "cultural relativism" of nationalists and others who justify barbaric, anti-woman practices like female genital mutilation and marriage-by-capture in the name of tradition, and we seek to put an end to such practices. There is nothing uniquely African about such practices—for example, *lobola* is a version of the bride price, something which has been practiced in societies in Asia and Europe at different periods, and still is today in countries like Afghanistan.

We fight for women's emancipation through socialist revolution. We seek to get rid of the institution of the family, which is the source of women's oppression. The functions of the family—childcare, housework, etc.—can't simply be abolished; they must be replaced by social institutions. In a socialist society, the workers state would seek to provide free, 24/7 childcare which is easily accessible at home and in the workplace; communal kitchens and laundry facilities; and other measures which would free women from household slavery and allow them to participate socially at every level. This is only possible on the basis of a socialist, planned economy, where production is freed from capitalist anarchy and irrationality and organised and run according to human need rather than profit.

"Two-Stage Revolution": Betrayal of Women, Socialism

The SACP claims to oppose the Traditional Courts Bill. Last year, delegates at the party's 13th national congress voted to reject it outright, just a few months after the SACP Central Committee issued a mealy-mouthed statement calling for "more discussion" on the bill and arguing, "Aspects of the Traditional Courts system that are progressive should be retained, but aspects that are in conflict with the non-sexist, democratic and nation-building goals of the NDR should be rejected." Not surprisingly, though, none of this has caused any noticeable disturbance in the SACP leaders' harmonious relationship with the capitalist government that is pursuing this reactionary bill—a government which they are a prominent part of. To take one example, Yunus Car-

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Gideon Mendel

AP

Left: Patients waiting for treatment at Soweto's Baragwanath Hospital, 2006. Right: Traditional healer advertises on outskirts of Cape Town, 2009. Quack remedies flourish due to wretched state of medical care for black masses.

rim, a member of the SACP's Politburo, is deputy minister of the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs—the very government ministry responsible for the bill!

The SACP leaders have a long history of betraying working-class interests in the name of the Menshevik/Stalinist schema of "two-stage revolution"—known in South Africa as the "National Democratic Revolution" (NDR). According to this schema, which serves as an ideological justification for their historic alliance and interpenetration with the ANC, conditions are not currently ripe for socialism. Therefore, first must come a political bloc with "progressive" bourgeois nationalists. Then, in some far-off and unspecified future, this will evolve into socialism. Throughout history, the "second stage" has in reality always been the bourgeois nationalists slaughtering workers and communists.

In 1964, historic SACP leader Govan Mbeki wrote the following fine words denouncing the traditional leaders: "If the Africans have had chiefs, it was because all human societies have had them at one stage or another. But when a people have developed to a stage which discards chieftainship, when their social development contradicts the need for such an institution, then to force it on them is not liberation but enslavement" (*The Peasants' Revolt*). However, in the name of the class-collaborationist alliance with the "progressive" ANC nationalists, the SACP leaders went along with every grotesque conciliation of the chiefs, and today they are among the most craven apologists for the government of the Traditional Courts Bill.

In order to go forward in its struggles, the working class must break with the Tripartite Alliance and with the reformist politics of class collaboration packaged as the National Democratic Revolution. In opposing the "two-stage revolution" schema, Spartacist/South Africa, section of the International Communist League, stands for the programme and perspective of permanent revolution developed by Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky. This posits that in countries of belated capitalist development, the outstanding democratic tasks historically associated with the bourgeois revolutions can only be carried out through the assumption of power by the working class, and that the working class, once in power, must fight to extend the revolution to the advanced capitalist countries to ensure the successful building of socialism.

South Africa is a particularly striking case of the applicability of Trotsky's permanent revolution, a unique society where European colonisation created a strong overlap between race and class through the brutal suppression and superexploitation of the black majority. To stress the intimate link between socialist revolution and national liberation for the black majority, and to combat the dominance of nationalist ideology, we raise the call for a ***black-centred workers government*** as a concretisation of permanent revolution. A black-centred workers government would unite the different tribal and language-based groups, and would include an active role and full democratic rights for the coloured [mixed-race, partly Malay-derived] and Indian minorities, as well as for those whites who accept a government based centrally on the black workers.

The measures needed to dismantle the racist migrant labour system and to free women from domestic slavery underline the vital need for an internationalist perspective: Development of the rural areas, programmes to provide housing and childcare to all, etc.—all these things will depend for their ultimate success on linking up with an international planned socialist economy, meaning the extension of socialist revolution to the advanced capitalist (imperialist) countries of North America, West Europe and Japan. In fighting for that goal, we seek to build a Leninist revolutionary vanguard party of the working class that would champion the cause of the vast unemployed urban masses, the landless, immigrants, women, agricultural labourers and all of those oppressed under neo-apartheid capitalism.

For New October Revolutions!

Black women played a heroic role in the struggle against apartheid, but because that struggle was politically dominated by bourgeois nationalism, their hopes of liberation were unfulfilled. For a positive model in the fight for women's liberation, we look to the Bolsheviks of Lenin and Trotsky. The Bolshevik-led October Revolution of 1917 was a dramatic confirmation of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution. The revolutionary government in the young workers state fought to carry out the Marxist programme for women's liberation. They immediately removed all impediments to legal equality, giving women the right to vote, breaking the hold of the church over marriage and divorce, and making these simple matters of civil registration. The Bolsheviks legalised abortion, set up literacy schools for young girls, outlawed discrimination against homosexuals, and abolished the concept of illegitimacy of children born out of wedlock.

But as Lenin explained, such legal changes are only the first step to the liberation of women. The second and more challenging step is laying the material foundations needed to actually replace the social functions of the family and liberate women from household drudgery. The Bolsheviks struggled, despite scarce resources, to provide large-scale socialised domestic services as a first step (see "The Russian Revolution and the Emancipation of Women," *Spartacist* [English edition] No. 59, Spring 2006, for a more extensive look at what the Bolsheviks did). But Russia was a backward capitalist country, and after the revolution the young workers state was economically devastated, isolated and surrounded by hostile imperialist powers. Lenin and Trotsky understood that the key to building socialism in Russia was the international extension of workers revolution to the more advanced capitalist countries, particularly to Germany.

This revolutionary internationalist outlook was later trampled on by a conservative, nationally-narrow bureaucratic caste represented by Stalin, which came to power in a *political counterrevolution* and pursued the anti-Marxist, utopian programme of "socialism in one country." Despite the subsequent bureaucratic degeneration and Stalinist misrule, the gains made by the Soviet workers state were tremendous, not least for women. Trotskyists defended the Soviet Union against imperialism and capitalist counterrevolution, and fought for proletarian political revolution to oust the bureaucracy and return the workers state to the road of Lenin and Trotsky. This is our perspective toward the remaining deformed workers states today—China, Cuba, Laos, North Korea and Vietnam.

One of the places where the Russian Revolution had a profound impact on the conditions of women was Soviet Central Asia. At the time of the October Revolution, this region was even more backward than Russia, still in a pre-capitalist mode of production and marked by the hideous oppression of women under customary Islamic law. The Bolsheviks undertook systematic work among these women, seeking to win them as allies and demonstrate the liberating potential of the communist programme to the peoples of the East. This was captured by Trotsky in a speech given in April 1924, celebrating the third anniversary of the founding of the Communist University for Toilers of the East in Moscow:

> "The sense, strength and the essence of Bolshevism lies in that it addresses itself not to the labour bosses but to the mob, the underdogs, the millions and to the most oppressed of the oppressed.... And this, moreover, means that the Eastern woman who is the most paralysed in life, in her habits and in creativity, the slave of slaves, that she, having at the demand of the new economic relations taken off her cloak will at once feel herself lacking any sort of religious buttress: she will have a passionate thirst to gain new ideas, a new consciousness which will permit her to appreciate her new position in society. And there will be no better communist in the East, no better fighter for the ideas of the revolution and for the ideas of communism than the awakened woman worker (applause)." ("Communism and Women of the East," reprinted in *Spartacist* [English edition] No. 60, Autumn 2007)

We fight, in this spirit, to build the revolutionary internationalist party needed to win new Octobers here and around the world.■

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Bangladesh...

(continued from page 12)

Dhaka University. Thousands of young people gathered, demanding that the government take tougher action against the fundamentalists. Among the demands raised were a ban on Jamaat, an end to funding of religious schools and hospitals and a boycott of the banks run by Islamic organisations. In defiance of the Islamists, women mingled with men while students, young people and secular writers and artists joined in. The protests grew in size and continued over many days, eventually growing to two hundred thousand, the largest that Bangladesh has seen for decades. The Bangladesh flag was prominent in the protests, showing widespread illusions in "secular" Bangladeshi nationalism as the solution to fundamentalism.

The "atheist bloggers" who were identified with these protests have been targeted for murderous violence by the Islamists: on 14 January, 29-year-old blogger Asif Mohiuddin, who had been hounded by Islamic reactionaries, was stabbed and seriously injured. A month later, the well-known "atheist blogger," Ahmed Rajib Haider, who had been threatened by pro-Jamaat activists, was found dead with his throat slit. When the tribunal passed down the life sentence for Quader Mollah, the Shahbagh protesters thought it was too lenient and demanded the death penalty. They fear that the people who are being convicted will walk free if the BNP wins the election, which is due within a year. There are also well-founded fears that Hasina could cut a deal with the Islamic fundamentalists, whom she has repeatedly conciliated in the past.

In 2006, Hasina signed an electoral pact with Khelafat Majlish in which she agreed that, if elected with the help of these fundamentalists, the Awami League would enact a blasphemy law and give legal backing to *fatwas*. The charge of blasphemy has increasingly been used by fundamentalists in Pakistan, and in Egypt when President Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood was in office, to inflict murderous violence on impoverished Christians of both countries. Even without a blasphemy law, Hasina's government had no qualms about arresting several bloggers and shutting down Web sites for supposedly offending religious sentiment. In April the government announced it would not adopt the anti-blasphemy laws as written. However, in response to their demand for state-sanctioned *Sharia* law (Islamic religious law), Hasina pledged that: "Our country will be run in keeping with the spirit of the Medina Charter...of our beloved Prophet Mohammad" (*The Hindu*, 15 April).

Hasina's grotesque promise to implement a *seventh century* Islamic charter did nothing to mollify the Islamists. In protest at not getting their full programme adopted, the BNP called for a two-day general strike on 5-6 May. Hefazat and Jamaat supporters unleashed a riot, setting much of Dhaka ablaze. An unknown number were killed in a crackdown before the government regained control. Among those attacked in the rampage by the Islamists was the Communist Party of Bangladesh, whose office was torched. Its members were lucky to escape with their lives.

Women Garment Workers Are Key

With the country engulfed in a crisis over the war crimes trials, the worst disaster in the history of the garment industry shocked the country and the world. The Rana Plaza factory building collapse in April annihilated more than 1,100 mainly women garment workers. This act of industrial murder showed the real workings of the capitalist market in one of the poorest countries in the world. Some 5,000 factories in Bangladesh produce garments for major North American and European brands. The workers toiling in near-slavery in these deathtraps are paid the lowest wages in the world for that industry—as low as $37 (£24) a month, far below subsistence, often working 15-hour shifts.

At the same time, the garment industry is a cornerstone of the country's economy and the millions of workers in these factories have potential social power. To prevent such power from being unleashed, the local garment bosses, aided by the Awami League government, brutally suppress trade unions, to the point of targeting union activists with murderous violence (see *WV* No. 1023, 3 May). Nevertheless, a number of strikes have swept the industry in recent years. And when news of the Rana Plaza disaster spread, hundreds of thousands of these workers walked out of work and marched on the headquarters of the garment manufacturers' association demanding "we want execution of the garment factory owners!"

The women who work in these factories are drawn from the villages, where illiteracy rates are high and the influence of religion and anti-woman prejudices are pervasive. For these women, a job in the garment industry opens up the possibility of escaping from the backwardness of village life. The ability of women to find employment in the cities breaks the taboo on mixing with men outside the home and enables women to become financially independent of their families. This fuels a backlash by the Islamists because it undermines the material basis for the traditional village and family hierarchy, within which women are blatantly traded as property. Dowry was prohibited by Bangladeshi law in 1980 but the legislation had little effect and the practice remains widespread. All aspects of personal and family law—regarding marriage, separation and divorce—are religion-based. Muslims are subjected to Islamic law, Christians to laws agreed by Christian churches and Hindus to Hindu codes. Numerous reports have documented an extremely high level of violence against women in Bangladesh. "Sulfuric acid—able to burn through skin, muscle and bone—is thrown on women for various reasons including 'refusal of marriage offers, rejection of male advances, dowry disputes, domestic fights, property disputes, and even a delayed meal'" (quoted in "Bangladesh: Violence Against Women," Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 2004). In 2002 the government introduced special laws to stop acid attacks; in 2011 the state restricted the sale of certain kinds of acids in an effort to reduce the number of these gruesome attacks.

Women have most to gain from the overthrow of capitalism in Bangladesh and, as indeed in all of South Asia, they will be a motor force for socialist revolution. The fight for the most basic needs of women—for literacy, education, contraception, an end to forced marriage and a way out of grinding poverty and oppression—requires a struggle to root out the very foundations of capitalist society. In 1994, when Jamaat launched a murderous anti-woman campaign against Bangladeshi writer Taslima Nasrin, we wrote that "Nasrin's case raises questions far beyond the important democratic issues of women's rights, freedom of speech and the separation of religion and the state," questions "that only a revolutionary socialist program can answer." Our article emphasised that:

> "In the Third World countries burdened by centuries-old 'customs,' even basic questions of democratic reform can be explosive, not least because women's subordination in the family has decreed them as the 'bearers' of the traditional culture to the next generation. But to unleash the tremendous revolutionary potential of the fight for women's emancipation requires the leadership of a genuinely communist workers party, armed with a broad new vision of a social order of equality and freedom. The fight for the basic needs of the vast mass of Bangladeshi women—an end to forced marriage and the seclusion of *purdah* and the veil; freedom from poverty and legal subjugation; the right to an education and decent health care, including abortion and contraception—is an attack on the foundations of the capitalist social order and poses nothing less than socialist revolution."
>
> —"Women and the Permanent Revolution in Bangladesh," *Women and Revolution* No. 44, Winter 1994-Spring 1995

When the imams issued a *fatwa* (religious edict) against Nasrin and put a price on her head, she was hounded out of Bangladesh in 1994 and has remained in exile, forbidden to return home, not only under the BNP government but also under the Awami League. Nasrin's case is a litmus test of the "secularism" the Awami League (occasionally) espouses, as well as for the left. At the time, the Bangladeshi Left Democratic Front, a coalition of leftist parties tailing the Awami League, condemned Nasrin for making statements against the Koran. Similarly, under a West Bengal government led at the time by the Stalinists of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), she was forced to flee Kolkota. This was a cowardly capitulation to religious obscurantism and a gross betrayal of women on both sides of the Bengal border.

The CPI(M)'s commitment to upholding capitalist class rule in India was brutally clear in 2007 when its cadres joined police in an assault on peasants who were resisting a forced land expropriation in Nandigram, West Bengal. As our Canadian comrades wrote in an article:

> "The Nandigram massacre had a precursor in a 1979 massacre of dalit (so-called 'untouchable') Hindu refugees from heavily Muslim Bangladesh. These refugees, some 30,000, had tried to settle on the small island of Marichjhapi in the inhospitable terrain of the Sundarbans, but the CPI(M) leaders declared their settlement 'unauthorized.' After a starvation blockade led to as many as 1,000 deaths, forcible removal began and hundreds were simply massacred. Settlers were tear-gassed, their huts razed, their fisheries and wells destroyed. As they were driven out of Marichjhapi, over 4,000 families perished."
>
> —*Spartacist Canada* No. 171, Winter 2011/2012 [reprinted in *WV* No. 993, 6 January 2012]

AP

1971: Some of the millions of refugees who fled Pakistan's repression of Bengali-speaking population.

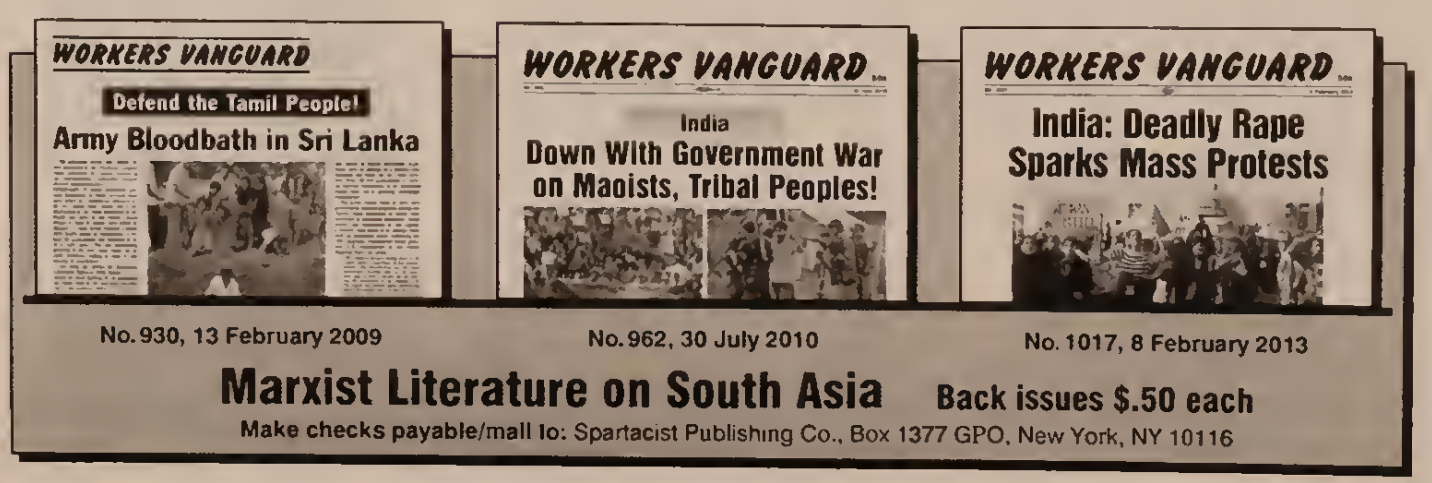
As opposed to Stalinists—such as the Communist Party of Bangladesh and its Indian counterparts—we Trotskyists fight for the perspective of permanent revolution: the overthrow of imperialist domination through workers revolution, uniting all of the oppressed, including women as well as the mass of toiling peasants, under the leadership of a Leninist party. Such a party will mobilise the social power of the proletariat in a struggle modelled on that of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 in Russia.

Religious Reaction—A Tool of the Imperialists

Particularly in the Indian subcontinent, the struggle for women's liberation, as well as for working-class unity, means combating communalism. In Bangladesh communalism by Muslim bigots is directed against the oppressed Hindu minority, who make up approximately 10 per cent of the population, as well as against Buddhists and the Ahmadiyya Muslims. Communalism is not some inevitable condition of the region, but the legacy of rule by the British imperialists, who used religion to drive a wedge between India's Hindus and Muslims, diverting their hatred of colonial rule into a communalist slaughter that accompanied the bloody partition of India in 1947. The creation of Pakistan was justified as supposedly providing a home for one "nation" of all Muslims, but this belies the reality. Capitalist rule in Pakistan is based on the domination of the Punjabi ruling class over Pashtuns, Baluchis and other oppressed nationalities.

Bangladesh owes its existence to the mutual hostility between India and Pakistan that resulted from partition. The former East Pakistan achieved independence only when India intervened militarily on the side of the Awami League. India's intervention had nothing to do with the Bengalis' legitimate struggle for self-determination, but was undertaken to weaken Pakistan. With the connivance of the Awami League, India took control of the fighting. As we wrote in an article published at the time, "the just struggle of the Bengalis was entirely subordinated and integrated into the interests of the predator India at the expense of the predator Pakistan" (*WV* No. 4, January 1972).

Bangladesh's claim to secularism, which was written into the country's first constitution, is a myth. Far from being secular, Bangladeshi nationalism is integrally linked to Muslim religious identity. For the Awami League, in independent Bangladesh "secularism" was defined in opposition to



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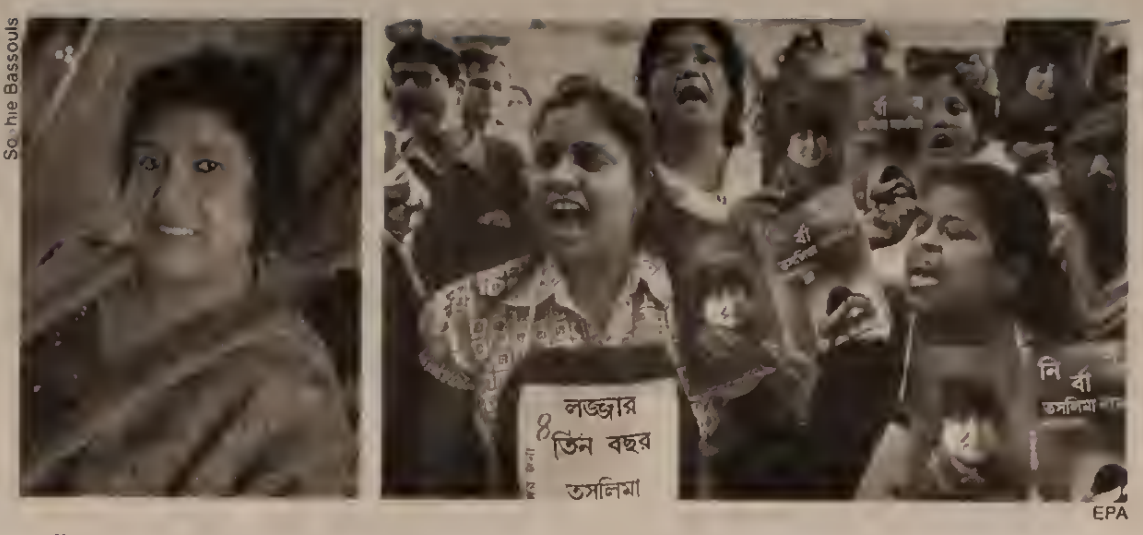
Pakistan and the religious fundamentalists such as Jamaat who had inflicted such brutality on the Bengali-speaking population. On the other hand, Bangladeshi nationalism accepted partition which forcibly divided the Bengali-speaking people along Hindu-Muslim lines. Mujib, the father of Bangladesh, had no hesitation in rebutting accusations that the Awami League was against religion: "The slanderous rumour is being circulated against us that we are not believers in Islam. In reply to this, our position is very clear. We are not believers in the label of Islam. We believe in the Islam of justice. Our Islam is the Islam of the holy and merciful Prophet" (quoted in *Religion, Identity & Politics—Essays on Bangladesh*, Rafiuddin Ahmed). Mujib's rhetoric about secularism was useful when it came to harvesting votes from among Bangladesh's Hindus. But he began to tone it down when he was forced to seek aid from Saudi Arabia when his country was stricken by devastating floods in 1974. Evidently the oil sheiks were not taken in by Mujib's backpedalling: Saudi Arabia refused to recognise the state of Bangladesh until the day after his assassination in August 1975.

India's claim to be a secular democracy is also false. The Indian state was founded on Hindu chauvinism and brutal oppression of minorities has been the norm, not only under the avowedly Hindu-supremacist BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) but under the Congress Party as well. Congress Party politicians orchestrated violent pogroms against Sikhs in Delhi in 1984. Decades of Congress rule paved the way for the BJP to ride to governmental power on the back of murderous anti-Muslim pogroms. India's massive military repression against Kashmir, the country's only majority Muslim state, gives the lie to New Delhi's claim that it is a secular democracy. Moreover it reinforces the grip of fundamentalists such as Jamaat on Muslims in Pakistan as well as in Kashmir itself.



Right: Taslima Nasrin, who has long been under fire from Islamic reactionaries. Far right: February 2012 Calcutta protest against cancellation of launch of Nasrin's *Exile*, one of a series of autobiographical works.

The resurgence of religious and social reaction seen today in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh is an international phenomenon. A key event was the war in Afghanistan waged by reactionary U.S.-, British- and Saudi-backed Islamic fundamentalists against Soviet military forces that were invited into that country in December 1979. The funding and arming of the anti-Communist Islamic *mujahedin* in Afghanistan in the 1980s in the service of the Cold War against the Soviet Union gave an enormous boost to Jamaat-e-Islami and many other Islamic insurgents. Capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union in 1991-92 gave a tremendous boost to the forces of reaction around the world. It was in this context that Hindu chauvinist mobs destroyed the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya in 1992, followed by widespread pogroms against Muslims. In a mirror image of the BJP's Hindu communalist terror, Muslim fundamentalists in Bangladesh unleashed their wrath against Taslima Nasrin and against the oppressed Hindu minority.

In a recent posting on her blog *No Country for Women*, Nasrin expressed the hope that Shahbagh "will turn into a positive political movement for a true democracy and a secular state—a state which affirms a strict separation between religion and state, and maintains a uniform civil code, a set of secular laws that are not based on religion, but instead, on equality, and an education system that is secular, scientific, and enlightened" ("Secular Uprising in Bangladesh," 3 March). Nasrin's ideal of a democratic, secular Bangladesh cannot be realised simply through mobilisations against the fundamentalists. Eruptions of communalist violence, including against Hindus, take place with the complicity of the central government, particularly under the BNP. Furthermore, the oppressive conditions of women in society are deeply rooted in the structure of capitalist society in neocolonial Bangladesh.

As Marxists we know that pogroms and explosions of communalism have to be ruthlessly suppressed. But the capitalist rulers are incapable of defeating the forces of political Islam. In the subcontinent, the relatively small but strategic proletariat of each country is the social force that can crush the communalists—by carrying out a socialist revolution. The working class of each country is divided by caste, religion and ethnicity. A revolutionary Marxist leadership must be forged in the fight for proletarian unity and class independence across national and religious lines. The class-conscious proletariat must take up the struggle for the emancipation of women and place itself at the head of all the oppressed, winning the rural masses to its side in a fight to overthrow the landlords and capitalists.

Proletarian socialist revolution—spread throughout South Asia and extended to the imperialist centres—can develop the productive forces on a vast scale. Eliminating scarcity will lay the material basis for freeing the masses from the yoke of religion, of caste, and for the liberation of women. What is necessary is the forging of Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard parties dedicated to the overthrow of capitalist rule in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. ■

Egypt...

(continued from page 3)

a "theoretical" rationale for tailing the Islamists, offering the watchword: "With the Islamists sometimes, with the state never." Founded in this tradition in 1995, the RS courted the Muslim Brotherhood, investing these clerical reactionaries with "progressive" credentials. Notoriously, the RS formally endorsed Morsi in the second round of presidential elections last year.

The RS justified its grotesque support to Morsi by saying that his victory would be "a blow against the old regime" (*Socialist Worker* [Britain], 2 June 2012). It was workers and the oppressed who felt the blow. As the Morsi government cracked down on trade unionists, it also frontally attacked women and Copts by strengthening Islamic legal strictures, supplemented by the extra-legal terror of Islamist mobs. With inflation raging and unemployment shooting up, the government, backed by the annual infusion of $1.5 billion in U.S. aid, pounded the masses with IMF austerity measures. Attacking the working class was nothing new for the Islamists. Previous regimes had alternately repressed the Muslim Brothers and unleashed them to suppress trade unionists and leftists. Under Colonel Nasser's nationalist rule, Muslim Brothers were given free rein to break strikes and slaughter Communists and others until 1954, when Nasser hanged six Brotherhood leaders and banned the organization.

Within months of Morsi's election, strikes and large-scale protests were again shaking the country, prompting the RS to switch banners with not a single word of explanation. By November, the RS had concluded that the Brotherhood and the remnants of the old regime "are two sides of the same coin, which is tyranny and enmity towards the people" (*Socialist Worker* [Britain], 24 November 2012). Had the Cliffites suddenly discovered the class line? Hardly. After returning from Egypt, Ahmed Shawki, a longtime ISO leader, proclaimed that "the forces united in the National Salvation Front represent, in many inchoate ways, the emergence of the second stage of the Egyptian revolution" (*Socialist Worker* [U.S.], 12 December 2012). The Front—basically a lash-up of bourgeois opponents of the Morsi government—would soon be courting the military in the lead-up to the coup.

In its August 14 statement, the RS ludicrously claimed that it "did not defend the regime of Mohamed Mursi and the Muslim Brotherhood for a single day." Such outright lies are the handmaiden of the deeper deception these opportunists practice by painting every change at the top of the bourgeois state as evidence of an ever-unfolding "revolution." Banging on about the interests of the "Egyptian people," the RS plays into the deeply held nationalist idea that Egyptians of all classes share a common interest. While rooted in a long history of foreign occupations, decades of British rule and the current ongoing domination by U.S. imperialism, this false perspective obscures the distinct class interests of the proletariat, especially its role as the potential leader of the oppressed masses against their common class enemy. To instill revolutionary consciousness in the working class requires forging a Leninist vanguard party in opposition to all bourgeois forces. The RS has shown time and again that it is an obstacle to this struggle. ■

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Cesar Chavez Student Center
Rosa Parks D
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ROTC Off Campus!
U.S. Hands Off the World!
CCNY, NAC, Room 1/209
138th St. and Amsterdam Ave.
Information and readings:
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CHICAGO

Thursday, October 17, 6 p.m.
Enlightenment Rationalism and the Origins of Marxism
Location TBA
Information and readings:
(312) 563-0441
chicagosyc@sbcglobal.net

TORONTO

Wednesday, October 9, 6:30 p.m.
For Free Abortion on Demand!
Women's Liberation Requires Socialist Revolution
University of Toronto, Room TBA
Information and readings:
(416) 593-4138
spartcan@on.aibn.com

VANCOUVER

Wednesday, October 16, 6:30 p.m.
Canadian Capitalism and Racism
Immigrants, Minorities: Key to Workers Struggle
UBC, Irving Barber Learning Centre
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WORKERS VANGUARD

Islamist Upsurge Threatens Women, Workers and Minorities

Bangladesh in Turmoil

AP photos

Left: Protesters in Dhaka on February 28 celebrate sentencing of Islamist leader convicted of war crimes at time of independence from Pakistan. Right: Security vehicle by burning barricade in Dhaka, May 5, as government moved against Islamist forces.

SEPTEMBER 28—Bangladesh has been shaken in the recent past by mass mobilizations that highlight the profound contradictions that characterize the South Asian state, where over four-fifths of the population scrape by on less than $2 per day. In the last week, as many as 200,000 mainly women garment workers and their supporters waged strikes and street protests demanding an increase in the abjectly miserable minimum wage from $38 a month to $100. The strikes, which also demanded maternity leave, forced the closure of hundreds of factories in the industrial suburban districts of the capital, Dhaka. The Awami League government of Sheikh Hasina responded with brute force, with police clubbing workers and firing tear gas and rubber bullets, injuring dozens.

Meanwhile, the religious reactionaries of Jamaat-e-Islami launched a two-day nationwide protest following a September 17 Supreme Court decision sentencing fundamentalist leader Abdul Quader Mollah to hanging. As explained below in the article reprinted from *Workers Hammer* No. 223 (Summer 2013), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain, the government has prosecuted a number of leading Islamists for atrocities committed at the time of Bangladesh's fight for independence from Pakistan in 1971. In response to the death sentence, Islamist mobs set off crude bombs and burned vehicles while schools and businesses were shut down, leaving Dhaka's commercial district all but deserted.

Social turmoil is likely to heat up further around general elections due to take place by late January 2014, as the bourgeois Awami League battles the rival Bangladesh Nationalist Party, with which Jamaat-e-Islami is aligned.

For a Socialist Federation of South Asia!

Jamaat supporters are enraged by the ongoing trials of its leaders, who are accused of atrocities that were committed against the Bangladeshi population at the time of independence from Pakistan in 1971. The revolt of the Bengali-speaking population led by the Awami League met ferocious repression by the Pakistani oppressor. Pakistan's military laid siege to Bengali areas and carried out a mass slaughter. Estimates of the numbers killed vary widely, but a commonly cited figure in Bangladesh is three million. Some ten million Hindus became refugees, many fleeing to India. The number of women raped by the Pakistani army and paramilitary units is estimated at tens of thousands.

The Pakistani side was supported by Jamaat-e-Islami, which actively opposed independence for Bangladesh. Its cadres participated in paramilitary units such as the Razakars (roughly, "collaborators") who colluded with the Pakistani troops in carrying out terrible crimes against the Bangladeshi population. Following independence, Jamaat and other organisations who had sided with Pakistan were widely hated in Bangladesh and were banned by the ruling Awami League. In 1973 the government decided to try collaborators for war crimes, but it later backtracked and declared an amnesty, releasing all suspects.

Over time, however, the political bankruptcy of the Awami League paved the way for the forces of political Islam to re-emerge as a force in the country. A key factor was the utter inability of the bourgeois nationalists to free the masses from extreme poverty. This was evident as early as 1974 by which time Bangladesh faced disastrous famine and floods. The venal and corrupt Awami League had lost popular support. It was overthrown in a military coup in 1975 that assassinated its leader, Mujibur Rahman (Mujib), and killed 40 members of his family—all but two daughters, one of whom is Sheikh Hasina, the current party leader and prime minister. The military coup brought General Ziaur Rahman to power, who welcomed Jamaat back to Bangladesh. He also founded the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). The country was run for years by military dictatorship, followed since the 1990s by rotating Awami League- or BNP-led governments.

But since 1971 the perpetrators of atrocities continued to walk free in Bangladesh—and other countries, including Britain, which gave many of them a warm welcome—and the issue festered. To capitalise on popular anger over the issue, in the run-up to the 2008 elections Sheikh Hasina revived the proposal to try those accused of war crimes. This was a cynical manoeuvre by a corruption-ridden party to refurbish its credentials as the party that led the independence struggle. Following a landslide election victory for the Awami League, the long-delayed war crimes proceedings began in 2010. Foremost among those accused are leaders of Jamaat.

Last December, before any verdicts were announced, Jamaat organised a general strike in protest against the trials. On 5 February Abdul Quader Mollah, assistant general secretary of Jamaat, was convicted of complicity in rape and mass murder and sentenced to life in prison. On 28 February, Delwar Hossain Sayedee, vice president of Jamaat and a former Member of Parliament, was sentenced to death, as was Muhammad Kumaru Zaman on 9 May. With each conviction, the Islamists orchestrated mob rampages against not only the government but also the oppressed Hindus. After Sayedee was sentenced to death, his supporters attacked Hindu villages, damaging more than 50 temples and destroying more than 1,500 houses in nearly 20 districts. Hindus were forced to flee with their families and continue to live in fear. Buddhist temples and statues were also damaged, notably near the southern city of Chittagong where the Islamists are strong.

The howling by the fundamentalists for the death penalty for "insulting Islam" is aimed at the pro-secular demonstrations that began on 5 February at Shahbagh, a major intersection in the capital near

continued on page 10

WORKERS HAMMER

For some months, Bangladesh has been in the throes of a general political crisis, with Islamic fundamentalists staging mass mobilisations against the government. In early May, Jamaat-e-Islami, the largest fundamentalist organisation in the country, mobilised its supporters to converge on the capital in what they called "Siege Dhaka." Hefazat-e-Islam, an outfit that was born in opposition to a proposal to give women equal rights to inherit, is

Mehedi Hasan

September 23: Garment workers in Dhaka block road in demonstration demanding hike in rock-bottom minimum wage.

WORKERS VANGUARD

50¢

No. 1032

18 October 2013

For a Workers United Front to Stop Golden Dawn!

Greece: Mass Outrage over Fascist Attacks

Athens: Greek Communist Party's trade-union formation initiated September 19 march against Golden Dawn near where Pavlos Fyssas (inset) was killed. Lead banner of the seamen's unions reads: "Block the Fascists."

Trotskyist Group of Greece, AP (inset)

In Athens in mid September, hip-hop artist Pavlos Fyssas was attacked by black-shirted thugs and fatally stabbed by a reputed supporter of the fascist Golden Dawn, sparking a wave of protests across the country. Notorious for frequent, deadly attacks on immigrants, minorities and leftists, the fascists have recruited and grown bolder as brutal imperialist-imposed austerity measures have inflamed nationalism and driven many Greeks to despair. Notably, the protests against the killing of Pavlos Fyssas overlapped with strikes of public sector workers, underscoring the urgent need to link the struggle against capitalist depredation with the fight against fascist terror.

On October 5 in cities across Greece, supporters of PAME, the trade-union formation of the Greek Communist Party (KKE), rallied in the thousands against government austerity and layoffs and in protest against Fyssas' killing. What is needed is a program to sweep Golden Dawn off the streets through united working-class mobilizations that draw in the workers movement as a whole, as well as immigrants and other intended victims of the fascists. This is the perspective put forward by our comrades of the Trotskyist Group of Greece in the 1 Octoher leaflet, reprinted below, that they distributed at the demonstration in Athens together with the article "Capitalists Bleed Greek Working Class" (printed in *WV* No. 1013, 23 November 2012).

* * *

The coldblooded killing of 34-year-old leftist and hip-hop artist Pavlos Fyssas hy a reputed supporter of Golden Dawn on September 17 in Keratsini laid hare the deadly danger these racist terrorists represent to immigrants, minorities and the entire workers movement. The mass outrage expressed by thousands of protesters in the streets of the working-class district where Fyssas lived and died, and all around Greece, must be channeled into an uncompromising struggle against the fascist menace and the capitalist system that breeds it. It is urgently necessary to stop the fascists through *mass, united-front mobilizations centered on the power of the organized proletariat!*

AFP

Golden Dawn *führer* Nikos Michaloliakos at February 2 rally in Athens.

The right-wing government of New Democracy and PASOK is currently making a show of cracking down on Golden Dawn, with the September 28 arrests of the party's leader along with several of its Members of Parliament and party officials on felony charges of belonging to a criminal organization. *Workers and the oppressed must not be fooled by this spectacle!* Are we to believe that the same state that rounds up and brutalizes immigrants in police cells and overflowing camps has suddenly become concerned about hundreds of cases of racist attacks by fascists? When Pakistani immigrant worker Shehzad Luqman was killed by racists in Athens in January there was no speech on television by the prime minister condemning the "successors of the Nazis."

The government's actions against Golden Dawn are both in order to defuse protests and because the escalating attacks by the fascists and the killing of Fyssas are an embarrassment internationally. The attacks and ensuing protests have hurt the government's attempts to promote the fantasy that Greece is stabilizing and on the road to recovery from its economic crisis. In reality, the lives of millions of Greek working people are being devastated through endless rounds of savage austerity dictated by the imperialist masters of the European Union (EU), centrally German imperialism. The desperation of the proletarian and petty-bourgeois masses thrown into destitution by this crisis is the fertile soil out of which Golden Dawn has grown. In the absence of a revolutionary, working-class leadership pointing the way out through struggle against the capitalist order, the fascists have found a real hearing for their scapegoating of immigrants and the left.

It is because the fascists conveniently deflect the responsibility for the crisis away from the capitalist system that they have also been nourished by the forces of the capitalist state, especially by the police. The extent of Golden Dawn's support among the police was revealed in the recent wave of resignations and reassignments of highly placed police officials suspected of colluding with these fascists. In fact, the capitalists have given aid and assistance to Golden Dawn because they always seek to keep fascist shock troops in reserve to unleash against any revolutionary struggle by the workers. It is therefore a deadly illusion to believe that the capitalist state can be used to combat the fascists, whether through the cops, courts or Parliament. This should be especially clear in Greece with its long and

continued on page 9

42

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John Bellamy Foster & Co.: "Ecosocialism" Against Marxism ... 6

"Who Can Save the Unions?"

By James P. Cannon

At its convention in Los Angeles last month, the AFL-CIO voted to bolster its numbers through affiliating unorganized "worker centers" and individual workers, creating "a student membership" and joining with "community partners" such as religious and environmental groups in its lobbying efforts. Purporting to address the massive decline in union membership after decades of anti-labor attacks by the bosses and their government, this policy is counterposed to any perspective of labor using its own weapons—from militant organizing drives to strikes—to beat back the capitalist offensive.

The following article by James P. Cannon—a founding leader of the Communist movement in the U.S. and later of American Trotskyism whose early political education was in the Industrial Workers of the World—addressed a similar situation faced by the labor movement nine decades ago, when it was dominated by conservative craft unions. A period of labor radicalism inspired by the 1917 Russian Revolution had crested in the U.S. in 1919, receding in the face of a wave of anti-black pogroms as well as the Palmer Raids in which thousands of Communists and other militants were arrested or deported. Membership in the American Federation of Labor would decline from over 5 million in 1920 to less than 3.5 million in 1929, as the bourgeoisie wielded "anti-trust" injunctions against unions and "yellow dog" contracts giving employment only to those who pledged not to join a union. Cannon's call to revive the labor movement through class-struggle means would find powerful expression in the mass strikes of the 1930s, out of which this country's industrial unions were forged.

Cannon's article was published in the 7 May 1921 issue of *The Toiler*, newspaper of the United Communist Party (later the Communist Party). It is reprinted in *James P. Cannon and the Early Years of American Communism: Selected Writings and Speeches, 1920-1928* (Prometheus Research Library, 1992).

* * *

The Central Trades and Labor Council of Greater New York has just adopted three recommendations of a special committee of 25 appointed to devise ways and means to combat the "open shop" campaign of the bosses. The unions cannot fight the open shop by the measures proposed; in that respect they have no value. But as striking examples of what not to do they may serve a useful purpose and, from that viewpoint, should be considered and analyzed. This is what the special committee recommended:

1. To organize a speakers bureau which will present the case for unionism to civic bodies, church forums and similar organizations.

2. To amend the constitution of the central body, permitting the seating of fraternal delegates from non-labor organizations interested in unionism.

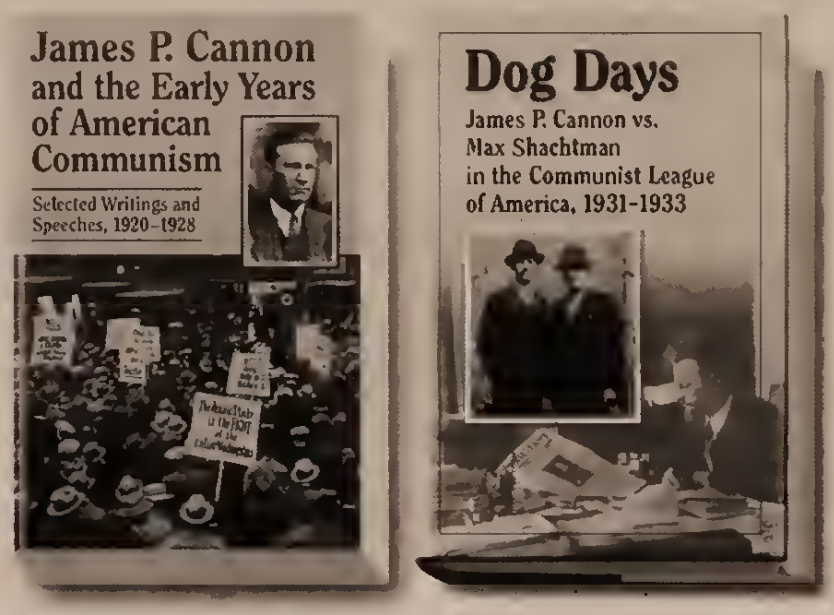
3. To seek greater cooperation with such bodies as the Interchurch World Movement, and other organizations felt to be working for union labor.

All three of these undertakings are based on a misconception of the nature of the struggle. The impression seems to be that labor's troubles in the present crisis are mainly due to a "misunderstanding" as to the aims of the labor movement on the part of some pious people who don't work for a living, but who are "felt to be working for union labor." But the real misunderstanding is in the minds of the delegates who adopted this program. Civic bodies, church forums, "non-labor organizations"—the elements who go to make up such groupings are poor props for the unions to seek to lean upon. They may "feel" for organized labor, but the organized workers never feel it in the shape of substantial support in their fight.

The "open shop" campaign is one of the manifestations of a state of war that exists in society between two opposing classes: the producers and the parasites. This war cuts through the whole population like a great dividing sword; it creates two hostile camps and puts every man in his place in one or the other. Those to whom the New York unions would turn for aid are beneficiaries of the present system of labor exploitation. Their interests lie with the system and, as a general rule, people do not allow their sympathies to interfere seriously with their interests. They live in the camp of the enemy. Their material welfare is bound up with those who aim to destroy the unions.

No, the labor unions can get no help in their struggle outside of the working class. More than that, they need no other support. The working class has the power not only to defeat the effort to destroy the unions, but to end the system of exploitation altogether. The principal thing lacking for the quick development of this power is the mistaken point of view illustrated by the program of the New York central body.

Let the labor unions put aside their illusions; let them face the issue squarely and fight it out on the basis of the class struggle. Instead of seeking peace when there is no peace, and "understanding" with those who do not want to understand, let them declare war on the whole capitalist regime. That is the way to save the unions and to make them grow in the face of adversity and become powerful war engines for the destruction of capitalism and reorganization of society on the foundation of working class control in industry and government. ■



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Former Panther in Solitary for 41 Years

Herman Wallace

1941-2013

Herman Wallace succumbed to liver cancer on the morning of October 4, nine days shy of his 72nd birthday. A Black Panther who organized fellow prison inmates at the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola, known as "the bloodiest prison in the South," Wallace had been free for just three days after over four decades in solitary confinement.

Along with fellow Panthers Albert Woodfox and Robert King, Wallace fought against the racist segregation and barbaric abuses rampant at Angola. When a white prison guard was fatally stabbed inside the prison in 1972, Wallace and Woodfox were targeted for their political activism and framed up for the killing. King was also held in solitary for 29 years, falsely charged and convicted of the murder of a fellow inmate. Each of these men, who came to be known as the Angola Three, was convicted by all-white juries.

Robert King was released in 2001 after his conviction was overturned. But James "Buddy" Caldwell, Louisiana's state attorney general and ambitious Democrat-turned-Republican, went on to obsessively work to block every judicial overturn of the convictions of Herman Wallace and Albert Woodfox. Woodfox remains locked up in solitary to this day despite having his conviction overturned by a federal judge in 2013—the *third time* a court has overturned the conviction—because Caldwell has again appealed his release.

A defiant Wallace made a statement before his death declaring: "I want the world to know that I am an innocent man and that Albert Woodfox is innocent as well.... The state may have stolen my life, but my spirit will continue to struggle along with Albert and the many comrades that have joined us along the way here in the belly of the beast." In an act both sadistic and vindictive, the state of Louisiana responded to the court order releasing Wallace by indicting him again the day before his death.

This outrage is similar to what the government is doing to 74-year-old Lynne Stewart, an outspoken leftist attorney with a history of defending radicals, black militants and the poor who remains imprisoned despite being terminally ill with Stage IV breast cancer. Convicted in a 2005 "war on terror" show trial for representing Egyptian Islamic fundamentalist cleric Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman in court, Stewart has been denied medical release despite an outpouring of appeals on her behalf. All opponents of racial oppression and prison

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Ireland's New Law: Still No Abortion Rights

The following article is reprinted from Workers Hammer *No. 224 (Autumn 2013), newspaper of the Sportacist League/Britain, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).*

DUBLIN—Last autumn, Ireland and the world were outraged by the tragic death due to septic shock of Savita Halappanavar at University Hospital Galway after she had been refused a termination [abortion]. Thousands protested on the streets of Dublin, other cities and towns across Ireland as well as internationally, calling for abortion rights. The mobilisations in Ireland were the largest abortion-rights protests in years and many had real expectations that finally, 20 years after the massive struggles around the "X case," women in Ireland would obtain some modicum of abortion rights.

During last year's protests we produced a leaflet (dated 16 November 2012) [reprinted in *WV* No. 1013, 23 November 2012] calling forthrightly for what women *need*: "For free abortion on demand!" and pointing out that "any effective fight for abortion rights necessarily means a hard-fought struggle against the full force of clerical reaction and against the capitalist state." In contrast, reformist left groups like the Socialist Party and Socialist Workers Party (SWP) focused their demands on "Legislate for the 'X case'" as a supposed first step in liberalising Ireland's abortion laws. What actually came about, the Protection of Life During Pregnancy Act, doesn't increase the availability of abortion one bit, while prescribing up to 14 years in prison for carrying out an abortion.

Irish Times (inset), Workers Hammer

Dublin, November 2012: More than 10,000 rallied in outrage after Savita Halappanavar (left) died of septicemia due to her being denied an abortion.

The new law, passed in July, codifies the ruling in the 1992 "X case," in which the Supreme Court overturned a lower court injunction banning a pregnant 14-year-old—who had been raped and was threatening suicide—from travelling to Britain for an abortion. Under the Eighth Amendment to the Irish constitution, passed in 1983, the value of the life of a pregnant woman was grotesquely equated with the life of "the unborn," and abortion, which was already criminalised by the 1861 Offences Against the Person Act, was made illegal except when the woman's life was directly threatened. In the face of massive outrage over the refusal to allow the young woman to travel to Britain, the Supreme Court ruled that the threat of suicide is in fact a threat to the life of a woman. It also ordered the government to produce legislation allowing for abortion in Ireland—in accordance with the extremely limited provisions of the Eighth Amendment—including when a pregnant woman is suicidal. The right to information about abortion and the right to travel abroad to obtain one were subsequently written into the constitution through referenda, while two attempts to remove the risk of suicide as a valid reason for abortion were rejected. For 20 years, successive governments (twice including Labour) have bowed to the diktat of the Catholic hierarchy, refusing to make allowance in Irish law for even the most restricted availability of abortion in Ireland.

As a result, thousands of women are compelled to travel to Britain every year for a routine medical procedure. Because of having to arrange (and raise money for) travel and accommodation, Irish women tend to have abortions later in their pregnancies. In 2012, 3,982 women from Ireland had abortions in England or Wales (plus another 900 from Northern Ireland where abortion is also practically banned). Of the women from Ireland, 31 per cent had abortions at later than nine weeks pregnancy, compared to 24 per cent of women from England and Wales. Such delays present a greater risk of complications. It was recently revealed that a 32-year-old woman of African origin from Ireland died in January 2012 after having had an abortion in London. She had been diagnosed with extensive fibroids and her requests for an abortion in Ireland were denied. Moreover the health authorities in Ireland wouldn't assist her in getting a termination abroad. She eventually managed to get to a clinic in London but died of extensive internal bleeding hours after the procedure.

Clerical Reaction Mobilises

The scandal-ridden Catholic church is today hated by wide swathes of Irish society. Few young people pay much heed

continued on page 5

torture must demand: *Free Albert Woodfox and Lynne Stewart now!*

A statement by angola3.org at the time of Wallace's death read: "Herman Wallace's early life in New Orleans during the heyday of an unforgiving and unjust Jim Crow south often found him on the wrong side of the law and eventually he was sent to the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola for armed robbery." Wallace had landed in a hellhole of massive proportions. Angola was a former slave plantation named for the Portuguese colony in Africa where slaves had been captured. The land was purchased by a former Confederate officer in 1880. Using the murderously cruel convict lease system, the owner housed inmates in what used to be slave quarters.

As recently as the 1970s, Angola's all-white corrections officers were called "freemen" and lived with their families on prison grounds, with inmate servants called "house boys." According to Robert King's autobiography, *From the Bottom of the Heap* (2008), prison guards stripped prisoners, shaved their heads and made them run a gauntlet of bats and clubs; incoming prisoners were sold as sex slaves.

At Angola—the largest maximum security prison in the country—some 85 to 90 percent of those imprisoned die within its walls. It is run by an evangelical zealot, Warden Burl Cain, who believes, literally, that the only way out of the place should be through redemption by Jesus. Grotesquely, Angola has become a popular stop for Christian fundamentalist tour groups. *Mother Jones* (23 March) reported: "In a 2008 deposition, attorneys for Woodfox asked Cain, 'Let's just for the sake of argument assume, if you can, that he is not guilty of the murder of Brent Miller [the slain guard].' Cain responded, 'Okay, I would still keep him in CCR [solitary].... I still know that he is still trying to practice Black Pantherism'."

It took remarkable courage for the Angola Three to "practice Black Pantherism" in their patch of hell, establishing the only recognized prison chapter of the Black Panther Party (BPP) in the nation. In a radio commentary released on October 12 to coincide with Wallace's memorial service in New Orleans, class-war prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, a leading BPP member in his youth, said: "The late L.A. BPP Deputy Minister of Defense, Geronimo Ji-Jaga (Pratt) once called them the most courageous Panthers of them all, for daring to organize in the heart of Angola."

Of his own nightmare and his struggle, Robert King told *Democracy Now*'s Amy Goodman in a February interview: "A lot of people that end up in solitary confinement also end up on the psychiatric ward in Angola or some other institution." As an article in *Slate* (7 October) noted, the U.S. invented systematic solitary confinement. Referring to the 1820s, the article remarked: "At the time, the system was considered extraordinarily progressive, given that it did not involve mutilating or executing prisoners for their crimes. It was also quite ineffective, as isolated prisoners tended to go insane." Wallace, along with King and Woodfox, filed a civil suit seeking to abolish long-term solitary confinement. The suit is still being pursued following Wallace's death.

The Angola Three collectively spent over 100 years in solitary, held in six-by-nine-by-twelve-foot cells for at least 23 hours a day. But they refused to be bowed. These men were motivated by revolutionary struggle as they understood it. Their persecution speaks to the capitalist rulers' burning hatred for the Black Panther Party, which represented the best of a generation of black militants. The Panthers were targeted for systematic extermination: In the 1960s-early '70s, the FBI's COINTELPRO program gunned down 38 Panthers, while hundreds more were imprisoned on trumped-up charges.

As revolutionary Marxists, we never shared the Panthers' black nationalist program. At the same time, we insisted that it was the duty of the workers movement to defend the Black Panther Party against vicious state repression. Herman Wallace's story and that of the Angola Three illuminate the workings of the capitalist justice system in all its hideous, racist reality. Our task is to build a multiracial revolutionary workers party that will lead the proletariat in sweeping away the entire apparatus of capitalist terror through the conquest of state power, finally uprooting black oppression and the system of wage slavery. Befitting their determined struggle, the Angola Three will be honored in a workers America.■

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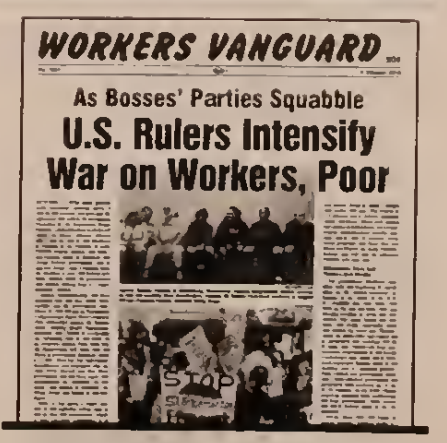

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Defend the Nationalized Energy Industry!

Mexican Government Drives to Privatize Oil

Reuters

Mexican president Enrique Peña Nieto lays out plan to privatize energy industry, August 12.

The following article was translated and excerpted from Espartaco *No. 39 (September 2013).* Espartaco *is published by the Grupo Espartaquista de México, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).*

Since the 1980s, the PRI [currently ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party] and PAN [National Action Party] governments have been set on privatizing anything in state hands that can be sold—from bicycle and textile factories to strategic industries such as railways and telecommunications. But the real jackpot that the U.S. imperialists (and some domestic magnates) have been waiting for is the oil industry, nationalized by Lázaro Cárdenas in 1938. Although the 2008 energy reform act opened the door to private participation in limited areas of the energy industry, no government had dared, until now, to push for privatization. This is a potentially explosive question, since large masses of Mexican workers and poor regard the oil expropriation as a historic gain, deeply connected with their heartfelt democratic aspirations, particularly national emancipation. Tens of thousands have been taking to the streets in protests initiated by Andrés Manuel López Obrador and the PRD [Party of the Democratic Revolution].

The proposal by [President Enrique] Peña Nieto would essentially open up the whole process related to oil and gas to national and foreign private capital, from the exploration and extraction of fossil fuels and the processing of natural gas to the sale of electricity. Unlike what happens with the service contracts that are currently permitted, this reform would allow private capital to keep the profits (despite not being legal owners of the natural resources). A proposal put forward by the PAN would likewise amount to the privatization of the industry. The government and the PRI claim that its reform is not privatization because [state-owned oil company] Pemex will not be sold— "not even a screw." But basically, all of its operations will be opened for private investment!

As revolutionary Marxists, we defend the nationalized energy industry as an elementary measure of neocolonial Mexico's defense against imperialism. As Bolshevik revolutionary Leon Trotsky—co-leader with Lenin of the 1917 Russian Revolution—wrote in defense of the oil expropriation against the schemes and attacks of the British imperialists, who were affected the most by the nationalization:

> "The oil magnates are not rank-and-file capitalists, not ordinary bourgeoisie. Having seized the richest natural resources of a foreign country, standing on their billions and supported by the military and diplomatic forces of their metropolis, they strive to establish in the subjugated country a regime of imperialistic feudalism, subordinating to themselves legislation, jurisprudence, and administration. Under these conditions expropriation is the only effective means of safeguarding national independence and the elementary conditions of democracy."
>
> —"Mexico and British Imperialism" (June 1938)

Demotix

August 31: Thousands protest in Mexico City against oil privatization plans.

For a Workers and Peasants Government!

As Trotsky himself explained, "The expropriation of oil is neither socialism nor communism." Although it raises an obstacle to imperialist dominance, the nationalization of oil or other strategic industries does not lead, in and of itself, to genuine national emancipation. We Spartacists base ourselves on Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution, confirmed by the Russian Revolution, which maintains that the bourgeoisie of backward countries like Mexico, no matter how radical its political representatives might sound, is incapable of solving the historic tasks associated with the bourgeois-democratic revolutions of the 17th and 18th centuries. The problems of political democracy, agrarian revolution and independent national development can be solved only under the class rule of the proletariat, through socialist revolution.

The working class in power cannot stop at these democratic tasks but must immediately move forward to the socialist tasks—the expropriation of the bourgeoisie as a class and the establishment of a collectivized, planned economy. The revolution must be extended internationally. The survival of the revolution in Mexico and its subsequent development toward socialism is unthinkable, economically and militarily, without the help of the multiracial U.S. proletariat. A workers revolution in Mexico would give a formidable impulse to revolution north of the Río Bravo. The proletariat in the U.S. must make its power felt in joint class struggle with its Mexican brothers and sisters against the designs of the capitalist rulers.

Break with the Bourgeois Nationalists!

Imperialist penetration has developed a powerful proletariat in Mexico. The national bourgeoisie, fearful of the working class and tied by a thousand threads to its imperialist masters, zigzags between these two poles at different times. As Trotsky explained, to the extent that the capitalist government tries to offer some resistance to excessive imperialist demands, it must lean on the proletariat. This was the case back in the 1930s with Lázaro Cárdenas, who stimulated national capitalist development through some nationalizations and secured the support of workers and peasants in the face of imperialist bullying. On the other hand, the governments in backward countries that consider it unavoidable or more advantageous to walk hand in hand with foreign capital destroy workers organizations and establish more or less totalitarian regimes.

Until the 1980s, PRI governments after Cárdenas pursued, to a greater or lesser extent, these nationalist politics. Mexican bourgeois nationalists maintained relative stability in the imperialists' backyard for half a century through brutal repression against striking workers, the left, union dissidents and rural guerrillas and, at the same time, granting significant concessions to the working class and the peasantry and carrying out some nationalizations. More recently, the Mexican rulers have been impelled by the economic crisis, their own ideological inclinations and certainly the counterrevolutionary destruction of the USSR in 1991-92—which removed a global counterweight to U.S. imperialism—to open the doors to unbridled plundering of the country by the imperialists. This was done particularly but not exclusively through NAFTA, the treaty for the imperialist rape of Mexico.

If there is something that Mexico's recent history demonstrates, it is that neoliberalism and populism are but two sides of the same coin. The PRD and Morena [López Obrador's Movement for National Regeneration] represent a nationalist wing of the bourgeoisie which strives to return to some version of the old PRI populism; these organizations serve the class interests of the Mexican bourgeoisie, and through this agency, the interests of world imperialism.

In any case, the PRD has a lot of gall posing as an opposition to energy privatization. Last year this party, along with the PRI and PAN, signed the "Pact for Mexico," which includes pushing forward "the necessary reforms to create a competitive environment for the economic activities of refining, petrochemical processing and transportation of fossil fuels"—the core of Peña Nieto's reform. Now the PRD, which also lost face after its support to the sinister education reform, has resurrected Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, son of General Lázaro Cárdenas, to launch a campaign against privatization. [For more on these issues, see "'Pact for Mexico': War on Workers, Poor," *WV* No. 1019, 8 March.]

Government Hands Off the Oil Workers Union!

Privatization will also mean attacks on the oil workers union and the labor gains of its members. Given the strategic nature of the oil industry and the state monopoly, the oil workers union is the most powerful in the country. The *Economist* magazine (10 August) declares that one of the problems with Pemex is that "it has never been treated as a profit-making company"; company revenues account for some 40 percent of the government's income instead of being reinvested. The same article complains that the "bloated and pampered" union is a burden on the company because many workers cannot be fired even when the wells they work have dried up. An article in *Letras Libres* (September 2008) lamented: "Currently, union members at Pemex enjoy the best contract of all public employees" and "are the only ones with their own health care system, which currently includes dozens of doctors' offices, 15 clinics and 22 hospitals." Oil workers are also entitled to a bonus equaling 60 days' wages as well as significant company support for renting, buying, building, remodeling or repairing a house, among other bene-

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Ireland...

(continued from page 3)

to the church's "moral" teachings in relation to their personal lives. However, the church still wields tremendous power in Irish society, not least through its control of most schools and hospitals. As soon as the government started making noises about legislating for the "X case," the anti-abortion bigots (who had kept a low profile in the immediate aftermath of Savita Halappanavar's death) came out in force. They organised large protests in Dublin at which busloads were brought in from around the country; priests and bishops fulminated from the pulpits, with Catholic primate of All Ireland, Cardinal Seán Brady, hysterically describing the Bill as a "'Trojan horse' which heralds a much more liberal and aggressive abortion regime in Ireland" (irishtimes.com, 2 July). Independent TD [member of parliament] for Waterford John Halligan received a death threat after he criticised the Catholic church for "attempting to interfere in the running of the State." He explained, "I am now being branded by personnel around the country as being a murderer. I'm going to have on my soul the death of 20 million babies. I'm getting medals, scapulars, plastic foetuses, letters written in blood, telephone calls all over the system and it's not confined to me" (irishtimes.com, 14 June). However, when the chairman of a Catholic primary school board in Dublin distributed leaflets for an anti-abortion protest to the students, outraged parents forced him to resign.

Despite the at times surreal right-wing uproar along the lines that the new law would "open the floodgates" and lead to "abortion tourism" into Ireland, the law in fact does not make abortion one bit more accessible. And Labour communications minister Pat Rabbitte ruled out any extension of abortion rights in the lifetime of this government. While the law now specifies that an abortion may be carried out when there is a "real and substantial risk of loss of the woman's life," this must be certified by two medical practitioners (except in an emergency when a second opinion is not required). If the risk to her life is due to suicide, the woman must submit to an inquisition consisting of an obstetrician and two psychiatrists to "prove" that she is suicidal! Almost any woman in that situation would rather get a flight to Britain than go through such a demeaning ordeal. Already some abortions are carried out in Irish hospitals to save women's lives, but they are at the discretion of the obstetrician (and the management board of the hospital, many of which are run by the church), a situation which will remain the same under the new law.

The most egregious part of the new law repeals the sections of the 1861 Offences Against the Person Act, which outlaws "procuring a miscarriage," but replaces them with a more far-reaching offence: "to intentionally destroy unborn human life." The penalty may be as much as an unlimited fine and ***imprisonment for up to 14 years!*** This sentence could be applied to a pregnant woman who carries out an abortion on herself, for instance by ordering Misoprostol and Mifepristone pills over the internet. While there are not good statistics for how many women obtain an abortion in this way, Irish Customs seized 487 tablets in 25 detentions in 2012 and 194 tablets in the first five months of 2013. While taking these pills is generally safe and effective, there is a risk of complications, which requires prompt medical attention. The criminalisation of abortion may deter women from seeking the necessary assistance, a danger which is increased now that they could face 14 years in prison.

For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

The new abortion law is so regressive that even the SWP and Socialist Party, who have been campaigning to "Legislate for X" for years, felt compelled to vote against it. The Socialist Party's Joe Higgins complained that the new law is "more restrictive than what the Supreme Court Ruling of 1992 and subsequent referenda would have permitted" (joehiggins.ie, 10 July). The SWP calls the law a "pathetic attempt to deal with the X case ruling" and notes that: "Unfortunately the worst fears of the movement for choice are now being realised" (swp.ie, 28 May). These groups have spent the past 20 years building illusions that abortion rights in Ireland would follow automatically if the government was forced to legislate. They restricted their demands to what was "possible" within the existing framework, and least likely to invoke the wrath of the clergy.

Even to obtain minimal abortion rights in Ireland requires a major confrontation with the Catholic church, which none of the major parties—including Labour and Sinn Fein—would contemplate, for fear it would be political suicide. The left has a shameful record of conciliating Catholic reaction. During the protests in 1992, the Militant (forerunner of the Socialist Party) explicitly tried to restrict the demands, arguing: "To campaign now for a referendum to repeal the 8th Amendment would be a mistake." They added: "Even more important, the campaign should demand that the government produces draft legislation to provide for abortion in Ireland under the circumstances permitted by the Supreme Court ruling" in the "X case" (*Militant Socialist*, May 1992). As for the SWP, in the aftermath of the 2002 referendum to overturn the "X case" ruling (which was defeated), they said: "We need to keep the pressure on parties such as Labour and Fine Gael to make sure that they make good on their commitment to bring in legislation—legislation that gives a liberal interpretation of the X case judgement and introduces real access to abortion rights for the women who need it" (*Socialist Worker* [Ireland], 15-28 March 2002). And this is not just ancient history—in the protests after Savita Halappanavar's death the Socialist Party wrote, "X is a start but it's not enough" while the SWP demanded of the government, "Legislate now!" They both appended calls for more abortion rights... some time in the future.

The Catholic church has very deep roots in Irish society and is intertwined with the whole edifice of capitalist rule. Abortion is a simple and safe medical procedure, yet it is politically explosive because it provides women with some control over whether or not to have children. This raises the spectre of equality for women and threatens to undermine the family, a central institution for raising the new generation and in helping to maintain and legitimise the system of capitalist class rule. The liberation of women from oppression requires socialist revolution which, among other things, will replace the social functions of the family, like housework and child rearing, with social institutions.

In the immediate aftermath of the "X case," the Dublin Spartacist Youth Group stated: "This Gordian knot of bourgeois 'constitutional' and legal wrangling can only be cut in a progressive sense by a tough, principled, iron-hard fight: not for this reform or that wording but for what is *needed* by women and the working class. Armed with a programme for working-class social revolution, the fight for free abortion on demand must be taken up with the same sense of unbending determination that marks the SPUC [Society for the Protection of Unborn Children] reactionaries on the other side of the barricades" (*Workers Hammer* No. 129, May/June 1992). Twenty-one years on, the utter bankruptcy of reformism is starkly apparent. The way to win any meaningful abortion rights (and decent health and childcare provision) is through mass struggle against the capitalist state, the church and reactionary anti-woman forces behind it. ■

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fits. These are gains worth defending and extending!

Carlos Romero Deschamps, head of the union and also a PRI senator, has avoided taking a clear position on Peña Nieto's reform. What he made clear, however, is that the union will "defend its rights through dialogue" and not by mobilizing: "Unionized oil workers will not behave like the teachers in the National Coordination of Education Workers (CNTE) when energy reform is taken up" (*El Economista*, 21 August).

For the time being, the PRI does not seem keen on going after the union on the eve of the vote on its reform. But neither the PAN nor the PRD nor Morena misses any opportunity to demand state action against the union. PRD head Jesús Zambrano declared that there can be no further development of the oil industry "on the basis of the corruption underlying the quasi-state company's union" (*La Jornada*, 19 March). In fact, the demand "Out with Romero Deschamps!" is part of Morena's "energy proposal."

Workers must oppose any intervention by the bourgeois state in the unions. Romero Deschamps is undoubtedly a corrupt and gangster-like bureaucrat, but the working class must clean its own house. As shown by the "Quinazo" and the "Elbazo" [referring respectively to the incarceration of a long-serving leader of the oil workers union and, earlier this year, the head of the SNTE teachers union], state intervention in the basic defense organizations of the working class can have no goal other than furthering state control over the unions, if not their outright destruction. The capitalist state—at its core made up of the police, the army, the prisons and the courts—is a machine of systematic repression directed against all the exploited and the oppressed. It operates at the service of the bourgeoisie in order to keep the working class under submission and to secure capitalist class rule. The state cannot be reformed to serve the interests of the working class; it must be destroyed through socialist revolution and replaced by a workers state that defends proletarian class rule.

The oil workers union, like other unions, is led by a pro-capitalist bureaucracy that acts to defend its own privileges. The bureaucracies that support the PRI generally stave off the membership through the fist of repression, while those loyal to the PRD more often resort to nationalist ideology to push class collaboration and illusions in the state. But whatever their ideology or political differences, all of these bureaucracies beg the state to be their protector and, frequently, their arbiter.

Trotsky's program of permanent revolution is the alternative to trusting in fantasies that the backward Mexican bourgeoisie, lackey of imperialism, will be a vehicle for liberation. As communists, the Grupo Espartaquista de México, together with our comrades throughout the International Communist League, fight for an international socialist economy through new October Revolutions around the world in order to end imperialism and every form of exploitation and oppression. ■

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Mexico, Imperialism and the Struggle for Socialist Revolution

- *For a Revolutionary Workers Party!*
- *For a Workers and Peasants Government!*
- *Down With Government Union Busting!*

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For info: (213) 380-8239
slsycla@sbcglobal.net

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Saturday, October 26, 2:30 p.m.

Rockridge Library, 5366 College Ave.
(5 blocks south of Rockridge BART)
For info: (510) 839-0851
slbayarea@sbcglobal.net

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BAY AREA

Thursday, November 7, 7 p.m.
The Marxist Scientific Worldview: Historical Materialism vs. Liberal Idealism
San Francisco State University
Cesar Chavez Student Center
Rosa Parks D
Information and readings:
(510) 839-0851
sycbayarea@sbcglobal.net

LOS ANGELES

Thursday, October 24, 5:30 p.m.
Readers Circle:
U.S. Imperialism Hands Off Syria!
UCLA, Ackerman Union
Meeting Room 2410
Information and readings:
(213) 380-8239
slsycla@sbcglobal.net

NEW YORK CITY

Wednesday, November 6, 7 p.m.
Lenin and the Vanguard Party
CCNY, NAC, Room 1/211
138th St. and Amsterdam Ave.
Take #1 train to 137th St.
Information and readings:
(212) 267-1025
nysl@tiac.net

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Thursday, November 7, 6 p.m.
Socialism: Utopian and Scientific
University of Illinois at Chicago
Addams Hall, Library, Room 200
830 S. Halsted Street
Information and readings:
(312) 563-0441
chicagosyc@sbcglobal.net

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Wednesday, October 30, 6:30 p.m.
Capitalist Profit Drive Kills
U of T, Sidney Smith Hall, Room 2104
100 St. George Street
Information and readings:
(416) 593-4138 • spartcan@on.aibn.com

VANCOUVER

Wednesday, November 6, 6:30 p.m.
Free Chelsea Manning! Hands off Edward Snowden, Julian Assange!
Capitalist Surveillance State: Everyone's a Target
UBC, Irving Barber Learning Centre
Room 460
Information and readings:
(604) 687-0353
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John Bellamy Foster & Co.: "Ecosocialism" Against Marxism

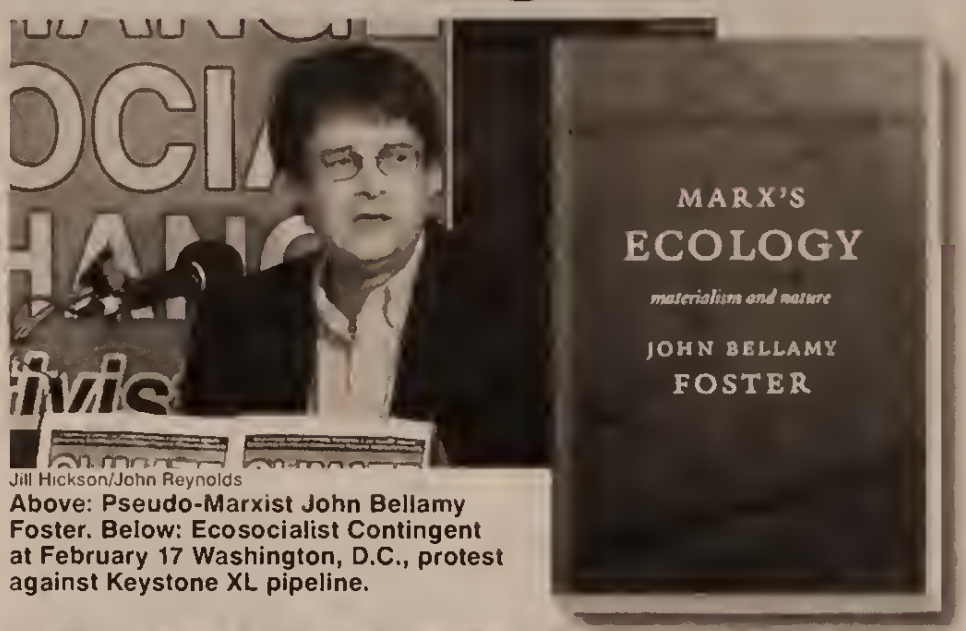
The United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a new comprehensive review of climate-related scientific research on September 27. The authoritative report finds that recent warming of the planet is, in its words, "unequivocal" and that human activity is "extremely likely" to be the primary cause. As the world continues to heat up, sea-level rise and the loss of Arctic sea ice are expected to be somewhat greater than was forecast in the IPCC's previous report, issued in 2007, although extremes of weather will likely not be as bad as some headlines have suggested.

Predictably, the "climate skeptics" launched a fusillade of anti-scientific drivel in an attempt to discredit the report, whereas the full spectrum of environmentalists read it as sounding the alarm for immediate government action. Among the green missionaries is System Change Not Climate Change: The Ecosocialist Coalition (SCNCC). This lash-up was initiated by the reformists of the International Socialist Organization (ISO), along with

PART ONE

the Solidarity group, in the name of "bringing together eco and socialism." Other endorsers include the fake Trotskyists of Socialist Action, the left-wing intellectuals of *Monthly Review*, the spiritually minded *Ecosocialist Horizons* and chapters of the small-time capitalist Green Party.

For young radical activists, it might seem a natural to try to fuse eco-radicalism with socialism. But environmentalist ideology and socialism are entirely irreconcilable. All variants of environmentalism are an expression of bourgeois ideology, offering fixes predicated on class-divided society and the reinforcement of scarcity. Marxists fight for a society that will provide *more* for the toiling and impoverished masses and ultimately eliminate material scarcity altogether. To this end, it will take a series of workers revolutions across the globe to rip the mines, factories and other means of production from the grip of their private owners, paving the way for an internationally planned, collectivized economy.



Jill Hickson/John Reynolds

Above: Pseudo-Marxist John Bellamy Foster. Below: Ecosocialist Contingent at February 17 Washington, D.C., protest against Keystone XL pipeline.

Ecosocialist Coalition

Until then, the profit-driven capitalist system—marked by the anarchy of production and the furious chase for markets, the division of the world into nation-states and the accompanying interimperialist rivalries—will remain a fundamental barrier to addressing the unintended human-derived contribution to climate change. Decaying modern capitalism also greatly exacerbates the potential toll of a warming world on mankind. The wretched conditions imposed by the imperialists on Third World countries make their populations especially vulnerable to climate change, not to mention disease, famine and other ever-present ravages. (These issues are taken up in depth in our two-part article "Capitalism and Global Warming," *WV* Nos. 965 and 966, 24 September and 8 October 2010.)

In contrast to revolutionary Marxism, for the eco crowd the villain is growth, and their watchword is *less*. Proposals to limit consumption and cut back production dovetail with capitalist austerity measures. The main political organization of the environmentalists, the Green Party, is open about its defense of production for private profit, simply favoring small-scale enterprise. The 13th-richest person in the world, the union-hating Michael Bloomberg, is an outspoken environmentalist who, after Superstorm Sandy, proposed that New York City "lead the way" in battling climate change. Even if the city rulers take steps to protect Wall Street from storm surges like the one that accompanied Sandy, it will still be hell—and perhaps high water—for those in public housing. Then there are the many large corporations, such as DuPont, not about to be mistaken for a paragon of virtue, that have voluntarily adopted the emissions goals of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol.

Most SCNCC supporters do not openly subscribe to the primitivism at the core of the environmentalist worldview, preferring to focus on dispensing policy advice to the bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, the ISO and its SCNCC partners proceed from the false equation of capitalism with economic growth. The putative anti-capitalism of these and other eco-socialists is simply another means of arriving at the doorstep of an anti-growth agenda, providing a thin reddish veneer on retrograde green nostrums.

Take one of its foremost luminaries, *Monthly Review* editor John Bellamy Foster, who has written or coauthored several books published by Monthly Review Press. Foster's seminal work, *Marx's Ecology* (2000), paints Marxism as "deeply, and indeed systematically, ecological." In a February 2010 interview, Foster opined: "We need a new economic structure focused on enough and not more. An overall reduction in economic scale on the world level, particularly in the rich countries, could be accompanied by progress in sustainable human development."

Progress in human development, i.e., ending misery and want, will not result from curtailing production but from *raising* it to unparalleled heights. By lifting the dead hands of private profit and property rights, the proletarian seizure of power would give great impetus to economic growth. In this event, humanity also will be best equipped to consciously marshal its collective resources to meet both known and unforeseen challenges, including climate change.

Our vision of the socialist future accords with that expressed by the great Marxist revolutionary Leon Trotsky in an article titled "If America Should Go Communist," which was published in the 23 March 1935 issue of *Liberty Magazine*. In describing the vistas that would be opened by a victorious socialist revolution in the world's most advanced capitalist country, Trotsky wrote:

> "Should America go Communist as a result of the difficulties and problems which your capitalist social order is unable to solve, it will discover that Communism, far from being an intolerable bureaucratic tyranny and individual regimentation, will be the means of greater individual liberty and shared abundance....
>
> "National industry will be organized along the line of the conveyor belt in your modern continuous-production automotive factories. Scientific planning can be lifted out of the individual factory and applied to your entire economic system. The results will be stupendous."

It should be noted that Trotsky was writing long before U.S. industry was hollowed out by its capitalist owners—a deterioration that itself points to the need for the working class to overthrow the capitalist order.

Intellectual Dishonesty and Opportunism

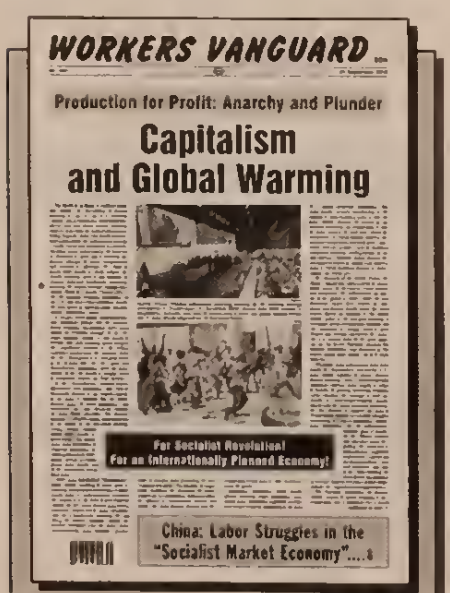
In 2002, Foster published *Ecology Against Capitalism*, a collection of essays written between 1993 and 2001. Leaning on sociologist Allan Schnaiberg, Foster described capitalism as "a treadmill of production" that consumes ever greater quantities of limited natural resources while disgorging their waste products into the environment:

> "Clearly, this treadmill leads in a direction that is incompatible with the basic ecological cycles of the planet. A continuous 3 percent average annual rate of growth in industrial production, such as obtained from 1970 to 1990, would mean that world industry would double in size every twenty-five years.... It is unlikely therefore that the world could sustain many more doublings of industrial output under the present system without experiencing a complete ecological catastrophe. Indeed, we are already overshooting certain critical ecological thresholds."

Ecology Against Capitalism in its own way mirrored bourgeois ideological triumphalism in the aftermath of the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92. Communism was declared "dead" and capitalism was trumpeted as an ever-expanding global system. Government policies in the major capitalist countries, especially control of the money supply and interest rates, would supposedly henceforth ensure permanent and steady economic growth. Bourgeois economists coined the term the "Great Moderation" to describe conditions in North America and West Europe: low inflation and relatively shallow and short-lived economic downturns.

But then came the financial crisis of 2007-08, plunging the capitalist world into the deepest and most prolonged economic downturn since the Great Depression of the 1930s. The Great Moderation gave way to the Great Recession. Mass unemployment, savage cuts in wages and benefits and the slashing of government-provided social programs (fiscal austerity) became the order of the day.

Logically, Foster should have welcomed the current downturn since he identified the expansion of production with increasing environmental degradation. Fewer automobiles manufactured and on the road mean less atmospheric pollution. With less income, working-class families are forced to "conserve energy" by reducing their heating in the winter and air-conditioning in the summer. However, Foster does not argue that the Great



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Recession has brought certain ecological benefits. To do so would provoke a hostile response from the young left-minded activists—e.g., those who identified with the Occupy movement—to whom he appeals.

So he sings a different tune about what's wrong with capitalism. Last year, he came out with the book *The Endless Crisis: How Monopoly-Finance Capital Produces Stagnation and Upheaval from the U.S.A. to China*. It begins:

> "The world economy as a whole is undergoing a period of slowdown. The growth rates for the United States, Europe, and Japan at the center of the system have been sliding for decades. In the first decade of this century these countries experienced the slowest growth rates since the 1930s; and the opening years of the second decade look no better. Stagnation is the word that economists use for this phenomenon."

The "treadmill of production" has disappeared. Instead, we are told that the core countries of world capitalism have been mired in economic stagnation for decades and beset by perpetual crises. Foster continues: "In human terms it means declining real wages, massive unemployment, a public sector facing extreme budget crises, growing inequality and a general and sometimes sharp decline in the quality of life." Notably absent from this list of ills is environmental degradation. In his speeches, Foster is known to describe capitalism both as a constant growth engine when addressing the "environmental crisis" and as a victim of stagnation when addressing the fiscal crisis, and never the twain shall meet.

From New Left Maoism to Green Radicalism

Foster's views are conditioned by his longstanding association with *Monthly Review*. In the 1960s and early-mid '70s, it was the main journal propagating Maoism (the Chinese variant of Stalinist ideology) in American left-wing intellectual/academic circles. Today a professor of sociology at the University of Oregon, Foster attended Evergreen State College in Washington State as an undergraduate in the early 1970s, when he first came under the influence of *Monthly Review* and its leading figures, Paul Sweezy and Harry Magdoff.

The Maoist-Stalinist politics expounded by *Monthly Review* originated as the ideological expression of what Trotsky described as the bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet workers state in the mid 1920s-30s. Rejecting and fearing the fight for international proletarian revolution, which animated the Bolshevik Party that led the October Revolution of 1917, the ruling bureaucratic caste under J.V. Stalin put forward the doctrine of "building socialism in one country." This dogma turned Marxism on its head. Socialism is a society of material abundance in which class distinctions are being finally overcome. Despite its possession of abundant natural resources, the USSR could not on its own surpass the material level of the advanced capitalist countries, which exerted economic and military pressures that eventually brought about the destruction of the Soviet workers state.

China experienced a profound social revolution in 1949 that overthrew capitalism and liberated the country from imperialist subjugation. The subsequent establishment of a planned, collectivized economy brought great social gains to workers, peasants and deeply oppressed women. However, the revolution, issuing out of a peasant-guerrilla war, was deformed from its inception under the rule of Mao Zedong's Chinese Communist Party (CCP) regime, a materially privileged, burcaucratic caste resting atop the workers state.

The Mao regime was modeled politically, economically and ideologically on Stalin's Russia, although China in this period was far more backward than the Soviet Union. Mao's version of "building socialism"—especially during the so-called "Cultural Revolution" that began in the mid 1960s—glorified the Spartan virtues of self-denial and self-sacrifice. While today's CCP bureaucrats are not known for professing such nostrums—to say the least—they share Mao's opposition to the Marxist program of world proletarian revolution. Challenges to the capitalist order would give impetus to the Chinese proletariat to sweep away the Stalinist caste that has politically suppressed it and appeased the imperialists.

AP photos

Left: Peasant commune in China's Henan province, 1959. Above: Mao welcomes Nixon to Beijing in 1972 as U.S. bombs rain down on Vietnam.

To understand the appeal of Maoism as propagated by *Monthly Review* for critical-minded, young American intellectuals like Foster, it is necessary to consider the outlook and evolution of the self-described New Left. In the late 1950s-early '60s, a generation of young liberal idealists, mainly college students, was propelled leftward by the mass black struggle against racist oppression domestically and the Cuban Revolution and escalating war in Vietnam internationally. Many of these radicals looked to Mao's CCP as an alternative to the stodgy conservatism of the Moscow Stalinist bureaucracy.

In this period, the large majority of the American working class, especially its predominant white component, supported U.S. militarism abroad in the name of combating world Communism. In their own way, New Left radicals accepted but then inverted official anti-Communist ideology. The political leaders and ideological spokesmen for U.S. imperialism claimed that capitalism was superior to Communism in Soviet Russia, not to speak of "Red China," because it provided the American people, including industrial workers, with a much higher standard of living. New Left radicals agreed with the logic of this argument but reversed its conclusion. That working-class families could afford a late-model car, a washing machine and a TV set or two was viewed as the material basis for their support to U.S. imperialist predations in the Third World.

The *Monthly Review* circle sought to provide a "Marxist-Leninist" rationale for these prevalent New Left prejudices: disdain for the working class in the advanced capitalist countries combined with enthusing over "socialism" in the Third World. Sweezy argued that the working class as a whole in North America, West Europe and Japan constituted a labor aristocracy relative to the impoverished toilers of Asia, Africa and Latin America. In *Monthly Review* (December 1967), he wrote that Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin "also argued that the capitalists of the imperialist countries could and do use part of their 'booty' to bribe and win over to their side an aristocracy of labor. As far as the logic of the argument is concerned, it could be extended to a majority or even all the workers in the industrialized countries."

When describing the labor aristocracy, Lenin was explicit that he was not painting the entire working class in the imperialist centers with the same brush. Taking stock of England's industrial monopoly and rich colonies in the mid 19th century, Lenin observed in "Imperialism and the Split in Socialism" (1916): "It was possible in those days to bribe and corrupt the working class of *one* country for decades. This is now improbable, if not impossible. But on the other hand, *every* imperialist 'Great' Power can and does bribe *smaller* strata (than in England in 1848-68) of the 'labour aristocracy'" (emphasis in original). This well-paid layer can occupy a privileged social position only in relation to the working masses of the society of which it is a part.

While disparaging the working class in the advanced capitalist countries, Sweezy glorified Mao's China for supposedly building an egalitarian socialist society in one of the poorest countries in the world. Indeed, he considered China's poverty a socialist virtue while crediting Mao with overcoming and eliminating what he contended were remnants of bourgeois ideology embedded in classical Marxist doctrine: "It was only in China, where of all countries in the world conditions were most favorable for revolution, that Marxism could finally be purged of its (essentially bourgeois) economistic taint" (*Monthly Review*, January 1975). By "economistic taint," Sweezy meant the identification of socialism with qualitatively raising the material and cultural level of society.

At the time, we polemicized against those intellectuals like Sweezy and Charles Bettelheim who had revived the *anti*-Marxist doctrines of primitive egalitarianism and "socialist" asceticism:

> "Far more so than Moscow-line Stalinism, therefore, Maoist ideology is a sustained attack on the fundamental Marxist premise that socialism requires material superabundance through a level of labor productivity far higher than that of the most advanced capitalism....
>
> "Maoism's primitivism and extreme voluntarism—particularly as presented during the 'Cultural Revolution' period—have had great appeal for petty-bourgeois radicals in the West. It was the promise of an end to alienated labor here and now, without the whole historical period needed to raise the technological and cultural level of mankind, that enabled many of the followers of [New Left theorist Herbert] Marcuse to transfer their loyalty to Maoist China in the late 1960's."
>
> —"The Poverty of Maoist Economics," *WV* No. 134, 19 November 1976

Maoism, however, lost its luster, particularly following the official rapprochement between the U.S. and China signaled by Richard Nixon's visit to Beijing in 1972 as American bombs rained down on Indochina. By the late 1970s, it was no longer attractive to American student youth of leftist sympathies. So the *Monthly Review* circle latched on to the burgeoning green radical movement, which also came out of the New Left. Whence John Bellamy Foster, today the journal's leading figure.

Reuters photos

Left: Bolivian president Evo Morales (at right) with Cuban foreign minister at forum outside UN climate talks in Cancún, December 2010. Below: Bolivian riot police fire water cannon at miners protesting Morales government and demanding higher wages, La Paz, April 2011.

Bolivia and the Fraud of "Ecological Revolution"

Just as his mentors could posit the introduction of socialist relations in China through a "Cultural Revolution," Foster does the same today in places supposedly in the throes of "ecological revolution." In both cases, the professed values of the ruling regime are sufficient evidence of socialist achievement. This is despite the fact that whereas capitalism had been overturned in China with the 1949 Revolution, the countries that Foster hails today are unmistakably capitalist.

continued on page 8

Foster & Co....

(continued from page 7)

In the book *The Ecological Rift: Capitalism's War on the Earth* (2011), Foster and his coauthors proclaim: "An ecological revolution, emanating first and foremost from the global South, is emerging in our age, providing new bases for hope." In keeping with *Monthly Review* tradition, they reject the unique capacity of the working class in both the advanced countries and in the neocolonial world to overturn the capitalist order and collectivize the means of production—a potential based on the proletariat's role in making the wheels of industry turn. Instead, Foster & Co. posit an "environmental proletariat" consisting of "the third world masses most directly in line to be hit first by the impending disasters," especially sea-level rise, as "the main historic agent and initiator of a new epoch of ecological revolution."

Ground Zero for this supposed revolution is Bolivia under Evo Morales, whom Foster hailed in a 2010 interview as "probably the strongest single voice for an ecological relation in the world today." Environmentalists widely laud Morales for hosting the World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth in April 2010 as a counter-summit to official United Nations climate negotiations. Foster also finds evidence of his environmental proletariat in "the water, hydrocarbon, and coca wars" that "helped bring a socialist and indigenous-based political movement to power" in Bolivia.

Despite its name, the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS—Movement Toward Socialism) headed by Morales makes no bones about administering "Andean capitalism." The social turmoil that Morales rode into office as the head of the bourgeois state involved a series of desperate struggles by Bolivia's impoverished masses to resist imperialist exploitation. For example, the "water war" in 2000 consisted of large plebeian protests that broke out in Cochabamba after the Bechtel corporation took control of the city's water system and jacked up rates by more than 200 percent.

In much of Latin America, popular revulsion at nakedly pro-imperialist "neoliberal" governments resulted in the election of a layer of bourgeois populists, including Morales and the late Hugo Chávez of Venezuela. This shift has nothing to do with socialism. Posing as defenders of the oppressed and exploited masses, Morales, Chávez et al. sought to co-opt and contain discontent within a capitalist framework, which necessarily means subordination to the world imperialist system. To smash the chains of imperialist oppression requires a proletarian revolution, led by a vanguard party, that shatters the bourgeois state. Such a revolution must have the perspective of spreading elsewhere in Latin America and, crucially, to the United States and other advanced capitalist countries.

The Morales regime showed its true colors this May when it unleashed violent repression against a nationwide strike called by the country's largest union federation, far from the first time that it had suppressed workers and peasants struggles. The strike had galvanized tin miners, teachers and health care workers in the fight for better pensions. Police repeatedly attacked, gassed and beat striking workers, arresting hundreds. The guns have also been turned on the indigenous population. In September 2011, the government carried out a bloody crackdown on a protest against the building of a new highway through indigenous lands. The brutal assault by paramilitary police reportedly left a three-month-old baby dead.

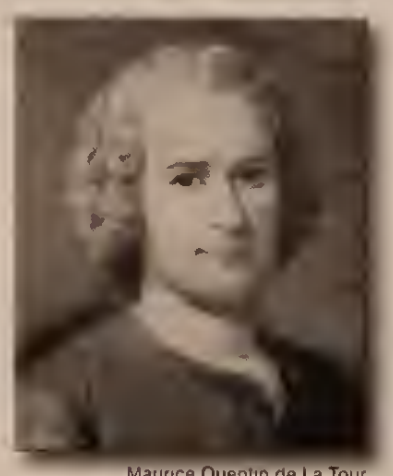
The anti-proletarian essence of eco-socialism is captured in Foster's salute to Morales and earlier to Chávez, which also shows how empty his "ecological revolution" is, even on its own terms. The economies of Bolivia and Venezuela are heavily dependent on natural gas and oil, respectively. Both regimes carried out partial nationalizations of their hydrocarbon industry. But it is not as if output has slowed. Indeed, in an attempt to double the production of natural gas by 2015, state-owned Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales Bolivianos is seeking both new foreign partners and new areas for exploration and production. The Bolivian government also plans to harness fossil fuel resources in national parks and protected natural areas.

Marxists defend such nationalizations as a means by which countries under imperialist domination can achieve a degree of economic independence. But these nationalizations do not herald a new socialist era. The hydrocarbon industries of Bolivia and Venezuela are part of national capitalist economies that are subordinate to the world market. In the end, nationalizing the hydrocarbon industry actually benefits the national bourgeoisies, not only at an economic level but mainly at a political level, by tying the masses ideologically to their own exploiters.

Taking a Bite Out of Consumption

There is another important element of continuity between the version of Maoism espoused by *Monthly Review* in the 1960s-70s and its eco-radicalism of recent decades: the condemnation of American capitalism for creating a society of excessive consumption. For Sweezy/Magdoff, the wide range of goods available to most workers in the U.S. came at the price of the impoverishment of the peoples of the Third World. For Foster, the existing level of consumption of the American populace is destroying the ecological basis for the future survival of the human species and other higher forms of animal life.

The notion that a large part of the living standard of working people in the U.S. and other advanced capitalist countries consists of artificially created wants that serve corporate profit-making has been a recurring feature of left-liberal ideology since the late 1950s. It was explicated in *The Affluent Society* (1958) by John Kenneth Galbraith, at the time the best known and most widely read liberal economist in the U.S. (He subsequently became an adviser to the Democratic Kennedy/Johnson administration in the 1960s.) A few years later, the identification of American capitalism with consumerism was given a "Marxist" gloss in Sweezy and Paul Baran's *Monopoly Capital* (1966), a book that strongly influenced Foster. In *Ecology Against Capitalism*, Foster declares that "wants are manufactured in a manner that creates an insatiable hunger for more."



Maurice Quentin de La Tour

Jean-Jacques Rousseau

At the same time, Foster criticizes mainstream green intellectuals and activists who appeal to individuals to curtail their personal consumption, i.e., reduce their "carbon footprints." As a polemical foil, he cites Alan Durning of Worldwatch Institute, who argues: "We consumers have an ethical obligation to curb our consumption, since it jeopardizes the chances for future generations. Unless we climb down the consumption ladder a few rungs, our grandchildren will inherit a planetary home impoverished by our affluence." Foster responds:

> "This may seem like simple common sense but it ignores the higher immorality of a society like the United States in which the dominant institutions treat the public as mere consumers to be targeted with all the techniques of modern marketing. The average adult in the United States watches 21,000 television commercials a year, about 75 percent of which are paid for by the 100 largest corporations."

Both Durning and Foster accept that the consumption levels of most Americans should be curbed, differing only in the means of accomplishing this goal. Foster worries that appeals for sacrifice in the name of some ecological morality alone would fall on deaf ears. His answer is government action to reorganize the economy. Somebody, then, would have to make decisions regarding the genuine needs of working people as opposed to their supposedly unnecessary wants. This task undoubtedly is meant to fall to Foster and other like-minded guardians of green virtue.

This focus on opulent consumer faddism is above all a petty-bourgeois critique of capitalism. For children of suburbia who turn to individual lifestyle changes to find meaning, the problem might be having too much. But "doing more with less" is not an option for the vast bulk of the population struggling each month to pay the bills and make ends meet.

Rousseauean Moralism vs. Marxist Materialism

Denunciations of the culture of consumerism did not originate in the post-World War II United States. The underlying idea that the striving of most people for higher levels of consumption is driven by artificially created wants conditioned by a competitive society based on private property was expressed in the mid 18th century by Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The main intellectual influence in the European radical left before Karl Marx, Rousseau was the intellectual godfather of all later forms of leveling-down egalitarianism. Describing the world after the advent of private property, Rousseau wrote in *A Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* (1755):

> "Free and independent as men were before, they were now, in consequence of a multiplicity of new wants, brought into subjection, as it were, to all nature, and particularly to one another....
> "Insatiable ambition, the thirst of raising their respective fortunes, not so much from real want as from the desire to surpass others, inspired all men with a vile propensity to injure one another.... In a word, there arose rivalry and competition on the one hand, and conflicting interests on the other, together with a secret desire on both of profiting at the expense of others. All these evils were the first effects of property, and the inseparable attendants of growing inequality."

Marx opposed the leveling-down egalitarianism prevalent among the socialist and communist currents in the early 19th century. The goal of communism is not to reduce people's wants to some preconceived minimum. Rather, it is to realize and expand those wants. In a fully communist society, everyone will have access to the great variety of material and cultural wealth accumulated over the course of civilization. Consider what is required to do research in particle physics or to investigate the archaeological remains of ancient civilizations. We Marxists aspire to a future society in which all can pursue the creative scientific and cultural work hitherto restricted to a privileged few.

For Rousseau, the emergence of private property was the social equivalent of the Christian concept of original sin, the moment when all manner of evils entered into and disrupted mankind's natural harmony:

> "The first man who, having enclosed a piece of ground, bethought himself of saying 'This is mine,' and found people simple enough to believe him, was the real founder of civil society. From how many crimes, wars, and murders, from how many horrors and misfortunes might not anyone have saved mankind, by pulling up the stakes, or filling up the ditch, and crying to his fellows: 'Beware of listening to this impostor; you are undone if you once forget that the fruits of the earth belong to us all, and the earth itself to nobody'."
> —Ibid.

In opposition to Rousseau's moralistic idealism, Marx applied a dialectical materialist understanding to the history of the human species. To reach a communist

Mayall

Karl Marx in 1875.

society, mankind must traverse a lengthy epoch of class-divided societies in which the majority is exploited and oppressed by a small minority of property owners:

> "Although at first the development of the capacities of the *human* species takes place at the cost of the majority of human individuals and even classes, in the end it breaks through this contradiction and coincides with the development of the individual; the higher development of individuality is thus only achieved by a historical process during which individuals are sacrificed." [emphasis in original]
> —*Theories of Surplus-Value*, Part II (Moscow, 1968)

In *Marx's Ecology*, Foster makes a big deal about upholding dialectical materialism. However, his actual outlook is essentially Rousseauean, not Marxist. Thus, in his earlier *Ecology Against Capitalism*, he describes the capitalist ruling elite as representing a "higher immorality" and condemns capitalism for bringing about the perversion of humanity and degradation of nature:

> "By reducing the human relation to nature purely to possessive-individual terms, capitalism thus represents (in spite of all of its technological progress) not so much a fuller development of human needs and powers in relation to the powers of nature, as the alienation of nature from society in order to develop a one-sided, egoistic relation to the world."

The left wing of the green milieu—neo-Rousseauean in its basic outlook—is especially incensed by the statement in Marx and Friedrich Engels' 1848 *Communist Manifesto* recognizing the historically progressive character of capitalism compared to earlier modes of production: "The bourgeoisie, during its rule of scarce one hundred years, has created more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together." In *Marx's Ecology*, Foster offers a halfhearted apology for this statement and then adds: "This leaves open the whole question of sustainability which they did not address in the panegyric to the bourgeoisie in the first part of the Manifesto."

With the advent of industrial capitalism, there was for the first time a material basis for envisioning an end to scarcity and class divisions altogether. But the private ownership of the means of production increasingly acted as a brake on the further development of the productive forces. The emergence of modern imperialism at the end of the 19th century marked the onset of an epoch of global capitalist decay. The nation-state system, which had served as a crucible for the rise to power of a modern capitalist class, proved too confining to the pursuit of profit. The imperialist powers, having divided the world through bloody conquest, embarked on a series of wars for its redivision, seeking to expand their colonial holdings and spheres of influence at the expense of their rivals. The goal of proletarian revolution is to resolve the contradiction at the heart of capitalism by collectivizing the means of production, thereby making the bounty of society available to all and unleashing the productive forces.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

Greece...

(continued from page 1)

bloody history of bonapartist dictatorship, military rule and civil war.

Democracy and Fascism

Not surprisingly, Alexis Tsipras, leader of [the left organization] Syriza, responded to the killing of Pavlos Fyssas by stating that "it is time for the state, through its democratic institutions, to deal with this phenomenon decisively" (ekathimerini.com, 23 September). Such suicidal illusions in the capitalist state and bourgeois "democracy" are now being promoted by much of the left. Probably the clearest example is the Socialist Workers Party (SEK), which is in the leadership of the Movement Against Racism and the Fascist Threat (KEERFA). Its response to the arrests of Golden Dawn leaders was to "celebrate" this development as the first step "to dismantle the murderous neo-Nazi mechanism" and to call to extend this "anti-fascist cleansing" to "include officers of Hellenic Police" (statement by the SEK Central Committee, 28 September).

The Antarsya coalition, of which the SEK is a part, also promotes the illusion that the forces of the capitalist state can be pressured to cut their ties to the fascists: in a 23 September statement it called for strikes "with the demands that isolate the fascists of Golden Dawn and demand an end to their support in many different ways by their state protectors." And while the Greek Communist Party may correctly complain that Syriza promotes illusions in bourgeois democracy, its own General Secretary, Dimitris Koutsoumpas, did the same thing in an interview when asked about legal measures to deal with Golden Dawn: "So, one issue is that the existing legal framework has not been put to use, so that we can see from there, of course, if it is necessary to also make some corrective moves or to have some additional measures.... There are procedures inside the Parliament, to examine the law" (*Rizospastis*, 21 September). All of these statements show a touching faith in the "democratic" credentials of the capitalist state, which are in fact the best disguise for the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

While Samaras & Co. were making pious pronouncements against Golden Dawn after the killing of Pavlos Fyssas, the prime minister's main adviser, Chrysanthos Lazaridis, made a statement on September 18 blaming Syriza as well as Golden Dawn for "political violence." Lazaridis' statement is in line with his theory of "the two extremes," which ludicrously posits that the very tame Syriza opposition is a "non-democratic party" comparable to Golden Dawn. It should be clear from this that any moves the government is making toward suppressing Golden Dawn are aimed at establishing a basis for crushing the left. Allowing actions to speak louder than words, the police have brutally attacked anti-fascist protesters and arrested dozens. ***We demand that all charges against the anti-fascist protesters be dropped!*** Meanwhile, the police, of course, amassed a large force to protect Golden Dawn's headquarters in Athens when anti-fascist protesters tried to march there on the night of September 25.

AFP

Police round up immigrants in central Athens, August 2012.

The government has floated several measures to supposedly weaken Golden Dawn, including the expansion of the legal definition of what constitutes a criminal organization to cover unarmed groups. Make no mistake: any expansion of the repressive powers of the capitalist state to go after political organizations and individuals, including "anti-racism" laws, will be used to go after the organizations of the working class and the left and must be opposed by the workers movement.

For a Workers United Front Against Fascism!

If the fascists have been able to grow stronger and bolder since Golden Dawn's entry into Parliament last year, it is precisely because a sharp struggle has not been waged by the mass organizations of the working class. The trade unions are ultimate targets of the fascists, but they also have the power to stop them by uniting the proletariat in struggle. That power has been completely undermined by the misleaders of the trade unions and the reformist left, all of whom promote illusions in bourgeois "democracy" and Greek nationalism. The economic crisis and the fascist threat facing the workers and the poor cannot be resolved within the framework of capitalism nor, ultimately, within the borders of small, dependent Greece. The fight for international socialist revolution and a Socialist United States of Europe is key to leading not only the Greek but all the workers of the Balkan region and Europe out of the crisis.

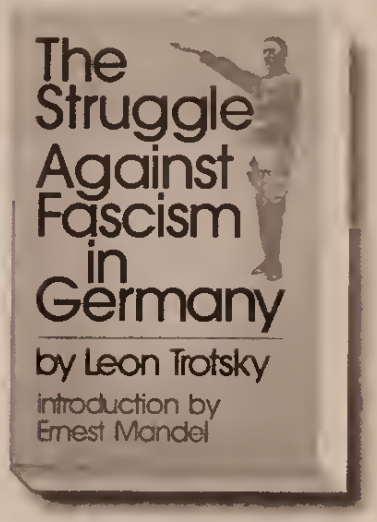
The problem is that the Greek left is opposed to such a perspective. First you have the so-called Marxists who are ensconced inside Syriza, a pro-EU formation that has bent over backwards to prove to the imperialists and Greek capitalists that they will be responsible administrators of capitalism. Next you have the so-called Marxists inside Antarsya, who like to pose as the "revolutionary" left and as the alternative to both the KKE and Syriza. In reality, Antarsya simply seeks to pressure Syriza from the left, and its oppositional posture is mere pretense. This was demonstrated by the fact that greetings by Antarsya's central committee to Syriza's national conference in July expressed not one word of opposition to the widespread illusion that a capitalist government of the "left" (i.e., Syriza) is the way forward.

It is notable that the KKE, a mass workers party that leads key sectors of the Greek working class, has through its PAME trade-union formation recently mobilized unions such as the metal workers and seamen together with others in Piraeus and nearby areas to stop Golden Dawn from rallying and carrying out a racist, "Greeks-only" food handout. The killing of Pavlos Fyssas was preceded the week before by a brutal attack by supporters of Golden Dawn on the KKE itself in Perama—nine KKE supporters were sent to the hospital as a result. The trade union-led actions called by PAME to stop Golden Dawn are more than overdue. These protests undoubtedly reflect sentiment at the base of the KKE to defend its party and the unions from the fascists. But these sentiments run in contradiction to the KKE leadership's persistent counseling against forming a "front" against fascism and its promotion of the fatuous illusion that Golden Dawn would be defeated, in the words of former KKE general secretary Aleka Papariga, "by the weapon of the vote" (kke.gr, 7 June 2012).

Although the KKE has the objective capacity through its influence over militant sectors of the working class to take the lead in mobilizing contingents of workers ***based on the trade unions*** to sweep the fascists off the streets, the KKE does not have the program to do this. Instead of a workers united front against fascism, the KKE today talks of a "people's alliance" against the fascists. This serves to hide the fact that Greece is a class-divided society in which the "people" encompasses both the exploited and the oppressed ***and*** their exploiters and oppressors. This is consistent with the KKE's call for "workers'-people's power."

Hulton

Exiled Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky raised urgent call for workers united front to stop German Nazis in early 1930s.



In the early 1930s, Leon Trotsky, co-leader of the 1917 October Revolution alongside V.I. Lenin, fought urgently to change the German Communist Party (KPD) leadership's suicidal policy of refusing to engage in struggle against the Nazis jointly with the German Social Democratic Party (SPD), which still had the allegiance of a large section of the working class. The Trotskyists, who considered themselves an expelled faction of the Communist International at the time, warned that the KPD leaders were undermining the struggle against the rise of the Nazis by adopting the call for a "people's revolution" instead of a proletarian revolution. Trotsky wrote:

> "In order that the nation should indeed be able to reconstruct itself around a new class core, it must be reconstructed ideologically and this can be achieved only if the proletariat does not dissolve itself into the 'people,' into the 'nation,' but on the contrary develops a program of *its* proletarian revolution and compels the petty bourgeoisie to choose between two regimes.... Under present conditions in Germany, the slogan of a 'people's revolution' wipes away the ideological demarcation between Marxism and fascism and reconciles part of the workers and the petty bourgeoisie to the ideology of fascism, allowing them to think that they are not compelled to make a choice, because in both camps it is all a matter of a people's revolution."
>
> —"Thälmann and the 'People's Revolution'," 14 April 1931

In response to the rise of the Nazis and the fact that many workers were still politically tied to the reformist SPD, Trotsky urged the KPD to make use of the tactic of the working-class united front as understood by the early Communist International: "the united struggle of Communists and of all other workers, either belonging to other parties and groups, or belonging to no party whatever, for the defense of the elementary and vital interests of the working class against the bourgeoisie" (Executive Committee of the Communist International [ECCI], "Theses on the United Front," 1922). The Trotskyists understood that it was only through the broadest unity in struggle by the workers, who have the social power to shut down the capitalist profit system, that the working-class organizations could defend themselves and the oppressed against the Nazis. But the united front was *not* a political non-aggression pact with the reformists—it was premised on both freedom of criticism and the political independence of the Communists, so that revolutionaries could seek to win over workers by exposing the reformist misleaders.

People's Front: Policy of Class Betrayal

That the Nazis were able to march to power in 1933 without even token resistance was a world-historic defeat and a betrayal by the Stalinist and Social-Democratic misleaders. After not a single section of the Communist International protested this betrayal, it was apparent to the Trotskyists that a new International and new revolutionary parties needed to be built. In a panic over the defeat, the Stalinists flip-flopped from their earlier policy of refusing to carry out united-front actions jointly with other working-class organizations to a policy of forming alliances with "progressive" bourgeois forces under the formula of a people's front against fascism. This was the opposite of a workers united front—it was a political bloc based on a bourgeois program. This people's front formula, which was upheld in the lead-up to and throughout World War II, led to the betrayal of revolutionary opportunities internationally, from France to Italy to Greece. These defeats permitted the re-stabilization of the capitalist order in West Europe after World War II and, after a bloody civil war, in Greece.

In revolutionary situations, the popular front has led to nothing but a long string of bloody defeats for the working class: Spain and France in the '30s, Indonesia in the '60s and Chile in the '70s. This is because the popular front is a bloc of organizations and parties representing various classes on the basis of a common program—the defense of bourgeois democracy. By definition, bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties cannot agree to fight for a revolutionary, working-class program. Thus the popular front forces the working class to give up the aims that are in its class interests and to accept the aims of other class forces—defending capitalism. A people's front always means abandoning the program of proletarian revolution and subordinating the workers

continued on page 10

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Greece...

(continued from page 9)

to the bourgeoisie. This is the recipe for working-class defeat that the KKE leadership has upheld for more than 70 years.

Subordinating the proletariat to the "people" goes hand in hand with the promotion of nationalism—the idea that there is a common interest among all Greeks regardless of their class. While the masthead of the KKE's newspaper may read "Proletarians of the World Unite," the party's response to the proposed closure of three state defense companies was pure Greek nationalism:

> "This situation develops at the same time that the rivalries in the area are increasing, sovereignty rights of the country are in question and the existence as well as the functioning of the war industry is more and more necessary in order not to weaken the defense capacity of the country."
>
> —Statement in Parliament by KKE MP Thanasis Pafilis, kke.gr, 12 September

The working class has no interest in maintaining capitalist Greece's defense capacity or the capitalist army. As V.I. Lenin said: "'Not a penny, not a man', not only for a standing army, but even for a bourgeois militia" ("The Military Programme of the Proletarian Revolution," September 1916). The purpose of the capitalist army is to defend the interests of the Greek capitalists by sending Greek workers to kill and be killed by their Albanian, Macedonian, Bulgarian or Turkish working-class brothers, when the capitalists deem this necessary. It is therefore not surprising that the bourgeois press is now circulating stories that members of special forces units in the military have helped train Golden Dawn supporters.

The working class cannot successfully fight to win the discontented and dispossessed masses to its side away from forces like Golden Dawn by competing to be the best defenders of the "nation" and its borders, as the KKE does. In Greece, nationalism means the brutal oppression of immigrants, Roma and national minorities such as the Macedonians, Vlachs, Pomaks, Turks and Albanians. It is no accident that Golden Dawn first made its mark in the early 1990s in chauvinist protests against the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia including "Macedonia" in its name. Golden Dawn MPs now get up in Parliament and spout racist abuse against Muslim MPs from Thrace, while claiming Istanbul as the rightful capital of Greece. In opposition to such vile nationalism it is necessary for the workers movement to take up the fight for full democratic rights for the national minorities of Greece, for the right of self-determination for the Macedonian minority in Greece and for a socialist federation of the Balkans as the only way to resolve the myriad national questions in the region.

For New October Revolutions!

There appear to be no bounds to the attempts of the Troika [International Monetary Fund, European Union and European Central Bank] and the Greek capitalists to decimate the working class. The public health care system, which was already nearing collapse, is now faced with further cuts in staff and funding. The government has even talked of entirely dismantling the main state health care provider, while you cannot even be seen in a "public" hospital without paying a fee and as of 2014 will not be hospitalized without paying 25 euros. The education system is also under attack—thousands of schoolteachers are facing layoffs. Major universities around Greece have announced that they are suspending all operations due to massive cuts in administrative staff demanded by the government. Official unemployment has swelled to almost 30 percent, while for youth it is around 60 percent. The bloodsucking banks are now demanding that the Greek government lift the ban on bank repossessions of the homes of those unable to make their loan repayments. The imperialist rulers and their domestic henchmen are not only trying to drive Greek wages and living conditions down to the level of neighboring Balkan countries but are also using Greece as a guinea pig for what they would like to do to the working class and poor throughout West Europe.

Reuters

February 6: Crowd scrambles for free produce distributed by farmers during protest outside Agriculture Ministry in Athens.

For all the protests and strikes called by the pro-capitalist bureaucracy of the ADEDY and GSEE trade-union federations since the beginning of the crisis in 2008, not a single austerity measure has been defeated. The increasingly desperate situation of Greek working people requires a leadership that through transitional demands links the daily struggles against austerity to the need to overthrow the capitalist order. For example, in response to mass unemployment and plummeting wages, such a leadership would fight for jobs for all with no loss in pay and the indexing of wages to inflation. But the trade-union bureaucracy, of which KKE representatives are a significant part, are not about to mobilize the full power of the working class in opposition to capitalist attacks because this would represent a challenge to the whole capitalist order. What is needed is a struggle for a new, revolutionary leadership of the trade unions, one that fights to keep the unions completely independent of the capitalist state to which they are currently tied by a thousand strings.

Unlike the rest of the left, the goal of the Trotskyist Group of Greece is not to build a movement that takes control of the existing state in the form of a "left" capitalist government. Our goal is to build a revolutionary, internationalist workers party like the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky, one that fights for the overthrow of the capitalist state, as part of the struggle for socialist revolutions internationally. ■

NYC Elections...

(continued from page 12)

De Blasio's career hews to a not-so-rare arc of Democratic Party operatives of his generation. From youthful flirtation with leftist politics, he went on to work for Dinkins, former New York Senator Hillary Clinton and the state's current governor, Andrew Cuomo. Next stop was New York City Council, then the city's Public Advocate and now, presumably, the mayor's office. Railing about income inequality is just the flavor of the day for a wing of the Democrats whose traditional role is to get in front of mounting discontents and channel them into the dead end of bourgeois electoral politics.

De Blasio and Labor

Despite his populist projection, de Blasio has a history of cozy relations with New York real estate developers, who join the construction industry as his top donors. Michael Greenberg observed in the *New York Review of Books* (24 October): "As a councilman his policy was much the same as Bloomberg's: to work with real estate developers to ease the way for large-scale projects, while attaching to these projects as many units of below-market housing as the developers would accept." De Blasio was instrumental in pushing through the City Council two rezoning laws to ease the way for apartment development in Brooklyn's Gowanus neighborhood that included no affordable housing. With property taxes currently making up nearly half of the city's tax revenue, Greenberg noted, "The city pays for basic services largely on the assumption of an ongoing real estate boom."

To bolster his "labor friendly" credentials, two years ago de Blasio made sure to have his picture taken at a picket line of striking Verizon workers. Such posturing gives him more credibility to try to rein in unionized workers on his own turf. Early this year, de Blasio used his Public Advocate office to clamor for an end to a strike by school bus drivers. The popular strike was called off by Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1181 leaders the day after they received a letter from de Blasio, Comptroller John Liu, former Comptroller William Thompson and City Council Speaker Christine Quinn—all of whom ran in the Democratic mayoral primary—calling on them to end the walkout (see "Union Tops Sell Out School Bus Strike," *WV* No. 1019, 8 March).

More recently, de Blasio made a point of getting arrested at a protest against Brooklyn hospital closings. As we reported in "Brooklyn Hospital Crisis: Union Jobs, Services for Poor Under the Ax" (*WV* No. 1030, 20 September), he has called for setting up a "super-authority" with extraordinary powers to oversee Brooklyn hospital restructuring—a body that would contain the same city and state officials who are overseeing and approving the closures right now. De Blasio holds up Montefiore Hospital in the Bronx as a model for providing hospital services in a high Medicaid area—the same institution that has been buying up smaller facilities and laying off workers in the process.

One of de Blasio's first tasks in office will be to deal with the municipal unions. For years, the labor officialdom has played dead in the face of the bosses' anti-union assault, bowing to New York State's Taylor Law, which bans public employee strikes. During Bloomberg's last term, the union tops' strategy was to work under the old contract, reasoning that whatever they could get from Bloomberg would be worse than what his successor would give out. Today, as the bureaucrats obediently fall into line behind the Democratic mayoral candidate, virtually every major public-sector union in the city, from teachers and other city employees to transit workers, is working under an expired contract.

In the face of union demands for up to $7 billion to compensate for past givebacks, de Blasio indicated that he would be willing to offer *some* back pay. In an interview with the *Nation* (20 August), he declared: "I always use the example of the 1970s, when the near-bankruptcy of New York City was a much tougher situation than what we face now, and labor stepped up and was very creative and responsible." The "creativity" he harkens back to is the labor tops' signing on to the looting of union pension funds and to job-cutting, wage-gouging contracts designed to meet the banks' demands to bail the city out.

AP

March 18: Protesters outside federal courthouse in Manhattan where suit against NYPD's racist "stop and frisk" policy was being argued.

Occupy Wall Street in the Mayor's Mansion?

At a time when even some ruling-class voices fret that the country's yawning inequality may be hurting the economy by limiting consumption, de Blasio's primary victory was widely hailed by liberal pundits. Charles Blow, op-ed columnist for the *New York Times*, called it a triumph of the "we are the 99 percent" call of the Occupy movement, while the *Nation* (4 September) celebrated the "rebirth of economic liberalism."

In a *Daily Beast* (12 September) article titled, "The Rise of the New New Left," Peter Beinart writes that many Democratic activists are envisioning their party breaking from the neoliberal playbook associated with the Clinton presidency. Beinart cites the younger political generation of "millennials" that came of age in a terrible economy, saddled with massive debt at a time when the government provided even less support. According to a 2011 Pew study, many Americans under 30 describe themselves as "have nots" and vaguely favor "socialism." In this climate, a number of politicians on the Democratic Party's left wing—such as de Blasio and Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren—have achieved some prominence, playing the populist card to reinforce the illusion that the system can be made to work for the little guy. And you don't even have to be a liberal Democrat to appear as the lesser evil when the Republican Party revels in union-bashing as well as racist, anti-woman, anti-immigrant reaction.

Playing the bourgeois shell game with its own rulebook, the International Socialist Organization (ISO) beams: "In the birthplace of Occupy, the mayor who

Jersey City Gentrification

Yuppie Mayor Bad News for Black Youth, Labor

AP

Rogoza/Jersey Journal

With Democratic mayor Steven Fulop (above) ratcheting up harassment of black youth in Jersey City, cops swept through ghetto areas in early August, arresting 47.

The new Democratic Party mayor of Jersey City, former Goldman Sachs equity trader Steven Fulop, has wasted no time in his bid to make the town appealing to professionals and big bankers of the New York metropolitan area. Intent on quickening the pace and broadening the scope of gentrification in the small city, Fulop has unleashed the cops against residents of the poor and heavily black south and west sides. The message: get out of the way. A series of sweeps were carried out involving not only the Jersey City police but also the Hudson County Sheriff's Office and prosecutor's office and the federal Drug Enforcement Agency. One raid involved more than 40 uniformed and another 40 plainclothes cops; 159 people were arrested.

Fulop has hired James Shea, a former deputy chief of the New York Police Department, to become Jersey City's Public Safety Director. Besides running the NYPD-FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force, Shea helped devise training for the NYPD's notorious stop-and-frisk program, which has victimized hundreds of thousands of blacks and Latinos. Fulop also created the Public Safety Department that combines firefighters, who heroically provide public service, with the cops, the hired thugs of the ruling class, under one command.

Sitting across the Hudson River from lower Manhattan, Jersey City was never an appetizing location for the affluent. It was the first stop after Ellis Island for millions of immigrants on their way to somewhere else. Those without the means stayed put. As Helene Stapinski put it in *Five-Finger Discount: A Crooked Family History* (2001), "The Statue of Liberty pedestal may have read, 'Give me your tired, your poor,' but if Jersey City had had a statue in the harbor, it would have said, 'Give me your completely exhausted, completely broken, completely hopeless and weak, who have no train fare to go any farther'." Today Jersey City is one of the most racially and nationally diverse cities in the country, including immigrants from all parts of the world. In the wake of the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, Jersey City residents from Egypt, Pakistan and other Islamic countries felt the lash of state terror, with many rounded up and packed off to detention centers.

For some time, Jersey City authorities have tried to lure companies and upscale residents from NYC. After September 11, 2001, quite a few Wall Street firms whose operations had been disrupted moved across the river, taking advantage of the far-cheaper real estate. And they stayed on, to such an extent that the waterfront section has been called "Wall Street West."

A political climber, Fulop padded his résumé by trumpeting how he took a leave from his job at Goldman Sachs to join the Marines after September 11 and did a stint in Iraq. Back in Jersey City in 2004, he made a failed bid for U.S. Congress but later reconciled himself with a seat on the city council. In a town notorious even in the state of New Jersey for its extreme venality, Fulop won the mayoralty in large part by promising to clean things up. (His predecessor, Democrat Jerramiah Healy, saw many of his political allies arrested as part of a federal sting.) In other words, he was ready for business with Goldman Sachs, and who needs a middle man?

A major obstacle to attracting young professionals is the wretched state of the public schools, which have been run by the state for almost 25 years. With a graduation rate of 67 percent, it is hard to get the wealthy to stay in town after their kids grow to school age. So, as in other municipalities across the country, teachers are being made scapegoats. Fulop's pushing of tenure "reform," more stringent teacher evaluations and expansion of charter schools is a direct threat to the teachers union. It's no surprise that billionaire financier David Tepper's political action group "Better Education for New Jersey Kids, Inc." chipped in $250,000 for his election: this outfit calls for getting rid of teachers' seniority and pushes other anti-union measures.

Even in the snake pit of county and state politics, Jersey City stands out for its history of corruption and official violence. This was epitomized by Mayor Frank Hague, who from 1917 to 1947 ruled the then-industrial city with patronage, anti-Communism and the iron fist of a 900-strong police force. Hague was also in charge of the Hudson County Democratic Party, and thus helped determine the fortunes of state and national Democratic politicians, including Franklin D. Roosevelt. During the 1930s, when the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) tried to organize in Jersey City, Hague mobilized anti-union thugs as well as the cops to keep it out. Socialist Party national chairman Norman Thomas, who was hardly a red revolutionary, was driven out of town when he tried to address workers. The repression was so intense that Trotskyist leader James P. Cannon referred to Hague at the time as embodying incipient American fascism.

Today, most of Jersey City's industry is long gone, some of its structures replaced by luxury condos and office towers. The gleaming Goldman Sachs building on the waterfront is located where the Colgate soap factory used to be. Most of what remains of unionized jobs in the city is comprised of teachers, medical workers and transit workers. The decaying shells of factories seen from the crumbling Pulaski Skyway and the impoverished neighborhoods far from the new luxury pet boutiques are a testament to the stark inequality and racial oppression at the core of American capitalism. This situation will only be addressed when the U.S. working class takes power and expropriates the banks and industry, using that wealth to rebuild this society for the benefit of the masses. ■

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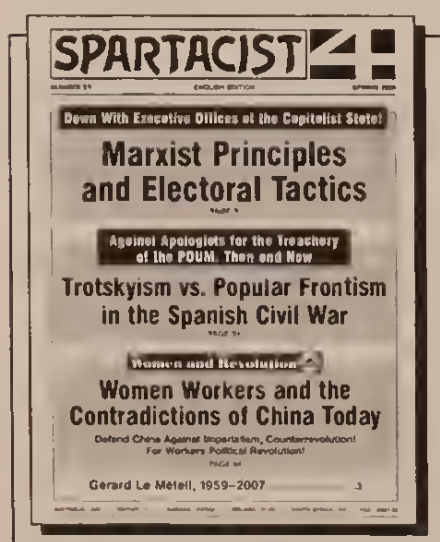
oversaw its eviction will leave office soon, and his likely replacement is a candidate whose campaign rhetoric about a 'tale of two cities' draws on the popularity of Occupy's message" (*SocialistWorker.org*, 2 October). As we insisted during the Occupy Wall Street protest two years ago, the movement's populist notion of the "99 percent" versus the "1 percent" obscured the fundamental *class* divide in society between the working class and the capitalist class, whose wealth is gained through exploiting workers' labor. We warned that with its liberal appeals to the government to rein in the blood-sucking finance capitalists—the class whose interests the government actually serves—the movement would end up a tail on the Democratic Party.

And now the ISO all but calls for votes for de Blasio, pronouncing in *SocialistWorker.org* (23 September):

> "Millions of working class and nonwhite New Yorkers are hopeful that local politics is finally heading in a positive direction. For those of us who are skeptical about de Blasio, our role should not be to dash these hopes (as if we could), but to try to channel them into the grassroots movements for change...that have helped to create this political moment."

The ISO adds that rather than dissuade others from campaigning for de Blasio, people should "instead demand that *he* campaign for us." Anyone who dusts off old issues of the ISO's *Socialist Worker* from five years ago will find that they said precisely the same thing about presidential candidate Barack Obama. These are chemically pure expressions of the ISO's program: the quest to reform the capitalist state apparatus through the agency of the Democrats.

The role of Marxists is precisely to smash illusions that the bourgeois state can act as anything other than an apparatus of repression in defense of capitalist rule and profits. Workers must be broken from the Democratic Party, including especially its most left-talking elements, and won to the task of building their own class party—independent of and in opposition to all parties of capitalist rule. Advancing a class-struggle program in defense of all the exploited, oppressed and dispossessed, such a party is a necessary instrument in the fight for a workers government that expropriates the capitalists and rebuilds society on the basis of a planned, collectivized economy. ■



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WORKERS VANGUARD

NYC Elections

De Blasio: Liberal Populist Face of Capitalist Politics

Getty

NYC Democratic mayoral candidate Bill de Blasio (left) with outgoing mayor Michael Bloomberg, October 8.

Bill de Blasio is poised to become the first Democratic New York City mayor in 20 years. The liberal politician came from behind to win the Democratic primary election and has built a 50 percentage point lead over his Republican opponent, Joseph Lhota, based on his populist appeals to working people, black people and Latinos and also middle-class professionals. De Blasio was an early critic of how the New York Police Department carries out its policy of stopping and frisking blacks and Latinos and went on to denounce the gaping and growing gap between the filthy rich and the bulk of the city's increasingly struggling population. But the hopes he has aroused are bound to be cruelly dashed. Whatever posture he takes today and whatever palliatives he may dole out, de Blasio as mayor will be charged with managing the finance capital of U.S. imperialism on behalf of the Wall Street plutocrats and real estate barons who run the city.

It has not hurt his chances that de Blasio's family portrait could have been commissioned by the producers of the *Modern Family* television series: an interracial family featuring a former lesbian activist and their photogenic children. De Blasio's TV ad describing concern over stop-and-frisk and featuring his 16-year-old son Dante sporting an Afro that would make a young Julius Erving jealous was a highlight of the campaign, so effective that lame-duck mayor Michael Bloomberg denounced de Blasio for running a "racist" campaign. That grotesque attempt at race-baiting fell utterly flat, which is as much a statement about how popular sentiment in the city is running as it is about Bloomberg's haughty piggishness. This is, after all, the same multibillionaire who responded to de Blasio's talk of a "tale of two cities" by declaring, "The way to help those who are less fortunate is, number one, to attract more very fortunate people."

De Blasio's promise to tax the rich and reform the police is being denounced as "class warfare" by Lhota and his press agents at the *New York Post*, who summon the spectre of New York returning to the fire-swept, crime-ridden 1970s. Deputy Mayor Howard Wolfson warns of a "wealth flight" from the city, while Bloomberg forecasts a Detroit-type bankruptcy if more money goes to social programs benefiting the poor and even minimal raises for city workers, who have been working under expired labor contracts for a year or longer.

In fact, de Blasio knows full well which side his bread is buttered on. The *New York Times* (11 October) reported: "Mr. de Blasio, who scarcely appears in public these days, has been holding closed-door fund-raisers at a breakneck pace, collecting hundreds of thousands of dollars in campaign contributions from the same bankers and Wall Street lawyers whose excesses he has frequently bemoaned." In an attempt to win over big bankers and others alarmed by his populist appeals, de Blasio recently told a meeting of business moguls in Midtown Manhattan: "Wall Street is our hometown industry."

De Blasio's "tale of two cities" campaign slogan has tapped into a reservoir of growing anger among the vast majority who have reeled under 12 years of Bloomberg rule—a banker's dozen that saw the mayor and his Wall Street cronies swimming in billions in profits while most everyone else either treaded water or sank deeper into poverty. While Bloomberg's personal fortune grew from $5 billion to $27 billion during his tenure, today 1.7 million New Yorkers, including 31 percent of children 17 and younger, live below the official poverty line. Approximately 50,000 people across the city–including some working two full-time jobs—spend the night in homeless shelters; over 21,000 of these are children. More than 167,000 families are on waiting lists for public housing, many for as much as ten years. The South Bronx, just a subway ride from Wall Street, is home to the Congressional district with the highest poverty rate in the country. Meanwhile, Bloomberg's beloved Manhattan is home to the widest income gap of any large county in the country.

Add to this the NYPD state of siege in the ghettos and barrios, where a walk to the corner grocery store is likely to be interrupted by a police interrogation. Since 2004, the cops have made over 4.5 million stops and frisks, under what federal judge Shira Scheindlin in an August ruling called a "policy of indirect racial profiling." Scheindlin declared the program as practiced unconstitutional and ordered a federal monitor to oversee police reforms, similar to the cosmetic measures de Blasio has called for.

As for the some 300,000 city workers wanting a new contract and expecting a reprieve now that Bloomberg is on the way out, they should know that in an October 4 speech to an overflow crowd of wealthy businessmen, de Blasio got a standing ovation after describing himself as a "fiscal conservative" focused on keeping a balanced budget as he negotiates with municipal unions. De Blasio will be heading into these negotiations in the same spirit as his onetime boss David Dinkins promised Wall Street during his successful run for mayor in 1989, "They'll take it from me."

No less than the self-styled independent Bloomberg and the Republican Lhota, de Blasio and his Democratic Party are class enemies of the multiracial, multiethnic working class that makes this city run as well as of the ghetto and barrio poor. His pretensions to the contrary make him an even more effective tool in keeping working people in the thrall of their capitalist exploiters. Workers and the oppressed have no horse in this race. As Marxists, the Spartacist League says: No vote to de Blasio! Workers need their own party, one that fights for workers rule!

Break with the Democrats! For a Class-Struggle Workers Party!

Love Me, I'm a Liberal

> "In every American community you have varying shades of political opinion. One of the shadiest of these is the liberals."
> —1960s folksinger Phil Ochs

In addition to his police reform schemes, de Blasio calls for a slight tax hike on incomes above $500,000 to pay for city-wide pre-kindergarten classes and after-school programs; for building more low-income housing; and for bolstering public schools rather than union-busting charters. This program appeals to many people after years of cutbacks under both Democratic and Republican governments on all levels.

De Blasio's program spurred his opponents to try to whip up right-wing hysteria, including by painting de Blasio as a socialist based on his support to Nicaragua's radical-nationalist Sandinista government in the 1980s. This effort gained as little traction as Bloomberg's race-baiting. At this juncture, the bourgeoisie sees no need for the whip hand to crack heads, such as that wielded by Republican mayor Rudolph Giuliani in the 1990s: a massage of the plebeian masses by a "man of the people" will do just fine. And while the *Post* and Co. may have nightmares about de Blasio "handcuffing" the police and turning the city over to the municipal unions, they can turn off the nightlight and rest easy—he will do no such thing.

On his signature issue of stop-and-frisk, de Blasio has never called for its elimination, merely its reform—i.e., repackaging the daily terror the police mete out in enforcing the racial oppression that is endemic to American capitalist rule. De Blasio's campaign calls for putting more cops on the streets with greater resources. Among his candidates to replace NYPD commissioner Raymond Kelly are Phillip Banks, currently the force's highest-ranking uniformed officer, and William Bratton, NYPD commissioner in the mid '90s and currently consultant for the Oakland police. Under Giuliani, Bratton engineered the "broken windows" method of policing—targeting minor violations like jumping a subway turnstile or playing hooky from school and designating "hot spots" for police attention and aggressive stopping and frisking. This spring, Bratton declared, "For any city to say they don't do stop-and-frisk.... I'm sorry, they don't know what the hell they are talking about. Every police department in America does it."

continued on page 10

Reuters

NYC fast-food workers protest starvation wages, August 29.

WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 1033 — 1 November 2013

Labor Must Fight for Immigrant Rights!

AP

Reuters

Immigration "Reform":
Ramping Up Border Crackdown, Guest Worker Servitude

Left: Demonstration in Washington, D.C., calling for passage of immigration bill with a "path to citizenship," October 8. Right: Homeland Security agents round up immigrants in one of series of workplace raids across Phoenix, Arizona, metropolitan area, August 17.

As soon as President Obama emerged victorious in the latest budget wars against the Republican Party, the Wall Street Democrat announced what was next on his agenda: immigration "reform." There is more than a casual link between the two items. As the spectre of a new financial meltdown loomed, the impasse over the budget and the debt ceiling was resolved only after leading financial titans and industrialists signaled that the intransigence of the Tea Party yahoos was damaging the interests of the capitalist ruling class as a whole. Now Obama aims to push through an immigration overhaul that serves these same interests, beefing up border militarization and reinforcing the brutal exploitation of foreign-born workers as part of an onslaught against the wages and living standards of the entire working class.

Obama was a key mover behind the immigration overhaul contained in Senate bill 744 (S.744), which was drawn up by four Democrats and four Republicans and passed by a two-thirds majority in June. On top of the massive increase in "border security" and the record number of deportations under his watch, totaling some two million, S.744 mandates $40 billion for another 20,000 Border Patrol agents and 700 more miles of fencing along the U.S.-Mexican border. The effect would be, as always, to shift the perilous routes taken by desperately impoverished Mexicans and Central Americans trying to cross over, leading to ever more deaths from drowning, dehydration and exhaustion and killings by the Border Patrol.

The border measure originated as an amendment tacked on to win the support of recalcitrant Republicans for the bill's 13-year "path to citizenship" and its expansion of "guest worker" visas. Strewn with all-but-insurmountable legal and financial obstacles, the "path" would offer the eleven million immigrants only a slim chance of a reprieve at the end of their ordeal. Nevertheless, racist reactionaries in Congress ludicrously decry the measure as an amnesty, much as they denounce Obama's Affordable Health Care Act—at bottom, a gift to the insurance and health care corporations—as "socialism." Against the likes of Ted Cruz, the Democrats can even play up their chutes-and-ladders path to citizenship to bolster their electoral support.

Chamber of Commerce types who throw their money at the Republicans fear not only that right-wingers in Congress will torpedo the overhaul package but that the Tea Party's undisguised hatred of darker-skinned people, foreign-born or native, will continue to cost the party in national elections. Latino votes count large in this calculation. Even Asian Americans, who not too long ago went Republican by a slight majority, now vote overwhelmingly Democratic.

While Republican-controlled state governments in the South and Southwest have enacted draconian anti-immigrant measures, some states run by the Democrats, like California, have loosened up a few restrictions that were irrational from a bourgeois viewpoint. For example, several states have tried to join several cities in opting out of the federal Secure Communities program, under which those jailed for even the most minor offenses have their fingerprints sent to Homeland Security, on the grounds that it makes it more difficult for local law enforcement to police immigrant neighborhoods. While there may be differences in what they say and how they say it, any policy disputes between the Republicans and Democrats boil down to how best to enforce U.S. capitalist rule.

Centrally important to business interests is the Senate bill's tinkering with the visa program for guest workers. Recruited to fill specific jobs, these workers, who mostly are paid a pittance, are relegated to a netherworld where they lack fundamental rights. In a *New York Times* (1 September) op-ed piece titled "Subcontractor Servitude," Jennifer Gordon describes how Jamaican guest workers brought in to clean luxury hotels and condos in Florida were made to pay exorbitant recruitment fees as well as extortionate rents for the tiny apartments they were packed into and then had their paychecks repeatedly bounce. When the fed-up workers went on strike, the subcontractor they worked for threatened that if they did not return to the job, *la migra* would put them on the next plane home. According to the National Employment Law Project, more than half the jobs added during what passes for the economic recovery in the U.S. have been in low-wage sectors where subcontracting is prevalent, as it increasingly is worldwide.

This situation underscores that defense of foreign-born workers against the capitalists and their state is in the vital interests of the working class as a whole. The vast majority of immigrants are driven to the U.S. and other advanced capitalist countries as a result of the entrenched poverty imposed by imperialist subjugation of their homelands. Thus the NAFTA "free trade" treaty, which greatly strengthened U.S. economic dominance of Mexico, spurred a massive increase in emigration. The immigration laws of the capitalist state, which are centrally driven by the need to manage the flow of cheap labor, are necessarily chauvinist and repressive. The economic crisis that erupted in 2007 led to the expulsion of immigrants not only in the U.S. but throughout the capitalist world. In Greece and several other European countries, the increase in official anti-immigrant repression has helped feed an explosive growth in fascist shock troops whose ultimate targets are the trade unions and all other working-class organizations.

We would welcome any measure that provides some actual relief from anti-immigrant oppression—something *not* on offer with S.744 or the various House bills now being hashed out. But as Marxists, we do not seek to advise the bourgeoisie on an alternative immigration policy, which would mean accepting the parameters of a system based on exploitation and oppression. Our demand is that ***all*** immigrants and foreign workers be entitled to immediate and full citizenship rights.

As with the fight against black oppression, which is embedded in American capitalism, the working class must actively combat the bosses' efforts to pit the native-born against the foreign-born—a divide-and-rule tactic they have used since before the Civil War. The labor movement must fight every instance of wage and other discrimination against immigrants, oppose deportations and undertake concerted action to organize immigrant workers into the unions with full rights. Such struggles would go a long way toward promoting the understanding that the multiracial, multiethnic proletariat has distinct class interests—counterposed to those of the racist, chauvinist capitalist rulers—that must be politically expressed through their own class party.

The pro-capitalist union tops take the exact opposite stance, collaborating with the bosses in regulating the flow of immigrant workers in order to protect their own privileges and reinforce the chains binding workers to the Democrats. In 2007, when Bush was in the White House, Chamber of Commerce and AFL-CIO officials tried but failed to come up with an agreement on guest-worker visas. But this spring the two sides helped prepare the way for the Senate bill by working out a program that pegs the number of visas to employment needs, up to a maximum of 200,000

continued on page 11

The Proletarian Revolution in Russia

To mark the anniversary of the 1917 October Revolution, we print below excerpts from Louis Fraina's introduction to *The Proletarian Revolution in Russia* (1918). The book mainly consists of articles by Bolshevik leaders V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky that were written, as Fraina noted, "during the actual course of the Revolution," from the overthrow of the tsar in February to the workers' seizure of power and the birth of the Soviet state.

In 1919, Fraina and other members of a left-wing faction in the Socialist Party who were expelled for advocating Bolshevism went on to found the Communist Party of America that September. James P. Cannon, a leader of the early Communist Party and later of American Trotsky-

By Louis Fraina

ism, remarked that Fraina in that period "did more than anybody else to explain and popularize the basic program of the Russian Bolsheviks" (*First Ten Years of American Communism* [1962]). In later years, Fraina, writing under the name Lewis Corey, renounced Communism. But as Cannon put it, "The best part of Fraina—the young part—belongs to us."

* * *

The persistence of Czarism in Russia after its historical necessity had ceased, its clinging to power after Capitalism had come into being, produced a dual political and social development. Within the shell of Czarism developed the bourgeoisie, the class of capitalists, and the proletariat,—a mature and aggressive proletariat. As the bourgeoisie developed power, the proletariat simultaneously developed its own power, while politically and officially Czarism retained ascendancy. When the shell of Czarism was burst by revolutionary action, Czarism disappeared as easily as a dream upon awakening, in violent and suggestive contrast to the painful and prolonged struggles required to overthrow the absolute monarchy in France, and in England; and the failure of the revolutionary movement in Germany in 1848. This unparalleled rapidity of accomplishment in Russia was directly and largely traceable to the development of the revolutionary proletariat.

Upon the overthrow of Czarism, the bourgeoisie and proletariat faced each other in battle array; where previous revolutions found the proletariat scattered and without decisive power, the Russian Revolution found the proletariat disciplined and inspired by traditions of revolutionary struggle, organized by the mechanism of capitalist production itself,—stronger than the bourgeoisie, and able to conquer for itself the power of the state.

This emergence of the proletariat, its independent class policy and class organizations, the Soviets, constitutes the decisive feature of the Russian Revolution,—an emergence definite and sufficiently aggressive to conquer power for the revolutionary proletariat....

As the tendency of action of the Russian proletariat was adumbrated [prefigured] in previous revolutions, so its class organizations, the Soviets, are, in general features, partially, incompletely apparent in these previous revolutions in which the proletariat instinctively tried to emerge for the conquest of power.

The revolutionary masses of the people, during the French Revolution, particularly in Paris, organized their own forms of revolutionary struggle and government, the *sections* and the *Commune*. While the average historian dwells minutely upon the action of the various parliaments and the Clubs, the sections and the Commune of the masses were of decisive importance. These sections and the Commune were not alone instruments of revolutionary action, but usurped certain functions of government, the tendency being to place all government power in the Commune, which was simply the organized masses trying to act independently of parliamentary forms and bourgeois representatives. This tendency was expressed in a more definite form in the Paris Commune of 1871, which completely dispensed with the forms and functions of the bourgeois parliamentary state, its purpose being to unite all France by means of self-governing communes, and from which Marx derived that fundamental canon of the proletarian revolution: the proletariat can not simply lay hold of the ready-made machinery of the bourgeois state, and use it for its own purposes.

The Soviets, the Councils of Workers and Peasants, are a much higher form and definite expression of this tendency of the proletarian masses ***to become the state***. Originally created as instruments of the revolution, the Soviets have become organs of government, functioning through a temporary dictatorship of the proletariat. The Soviets are revolutionary organizations of the masses; but they are more: they are forms for the creation of a new type of government, which shall supersede the bourgeois political state. Instead of being amorphous "mass organizations" as were the sections and Communes in the French Revolution, the Soviets are industrial organizations uniting the functions of industry and government. In the Soviets appears the true form of government of the proletariat, based upon the producers organized in the workshops. In the workshops lies not only the power of the workers for the revolution, but equally the groupings upon which is based the self-government of the oncoming communist society of Socialism. And the Soviets, combining temporarily political and industrial functions, are developing the forms out of which will emerge the communist, industrial "government" of the days to come. The *tendency* of previous revolutions is the dominant *fact* of the Russian Revolution.

The proletarian revolution in Russia has revealed clearly and in definite form the methods and the purposes, the action and the "state" by means of which the proletariat can conquer power and accomplish its emancipation.

The definite success of the proletarian revolution in Russia depends not alone upon the Russian masses, but much more upon the revolutionary action of the masses in the rest of Europe. The Russian Revolution cannot accomplish that which the French Revolution accomplished—wage war upon the whole of Europe. The strength and the weakness of the proletarian revolution in Russia is precisely that the other European nations are much more highly developed economically. Revolutionary France was the most advanced nation economically in Europe (except England), and this greater economic power was a source of unparalleled political and military vigor to France, making feasible a war against all of Europe. But the proletarian revolution in Russia is vulnerable to a concerted attack of European Imperialism, because the other nations of Europe can mobilize infinitely superior economic forces; simultaneously, this situation is one favorable to the Russian Revolution, since the higher stage of economic development in the other nations prepares the conditions for supplementary revolutionary action, which alone can ultimately preserve the Russian Revolution. Monarchic Europe could not produce a revolution in accord with that in France; modern Europe can produce a proletarian revolution in accord with that in Russia. The proletarian revolution in Russia requires and struggles for the Social Revolution in Europe. The revolution of the proletariat is an international revolution. ■

Novosti

Petrograd, 1917: Meeting at railway station calling for formation of Red Guard detachments.

WORKERS VANGUARD

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The closing date for news in this issue is October 29

No. 1033 **1 November 2013**

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Thursday, November 7, 7 p.m.

The Marxist Scientific Worldview: Historical Materialism vs. Liberal Idealism

San Francisco State University
Cesar Chavez Student Center
Rosa Parks D

Information and readings:
(510) 839-0851 • sycbayarea@sbcglobal.net

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Thursday, November 14, 5:30 p.m.

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UCLA, Ackerman Union
Meeting Room 2410

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slsycla@sbcglobal.net

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Lenin and the Vanguard Party

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138th St. and Amsterdam Ave.
Take #1 train to 137th St.

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(212) 267-1025 • nysl@iiac.net

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Thursday, November 7, 6 p.m.

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University of Illinois at Chicago
Addams Hall, Library, Room 200
830 S. Halsted Street

Information and readings:
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TORONTO

Wednesday, November 20, 6:30 p.m.

The Capitalist State—Racist Police Terror and War

U of T, Sidney Smith Hall, Room TBA
100 St. George Street

Information and readings:
(416) 593-4138 • spartcan@on.aibn.com

VANCOUVER

Wednesday, November 6, 6:30 p.m.

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Room 460

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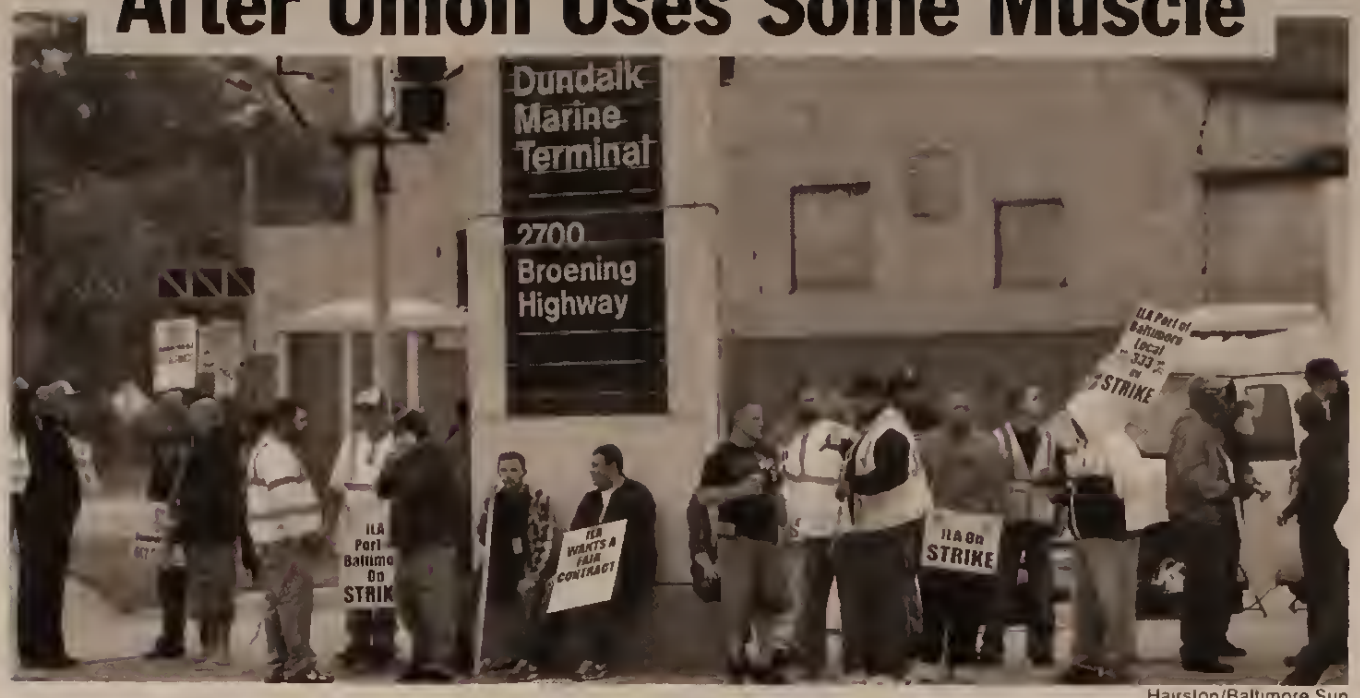
After Union Uses Some Muscle



Hairston/Baltimore Sun

Striking ILA members man picket line at Port of Baltimore on October 16.

Baltimore ILA Tops Bow to Arbitrator, End Strike

On October 18, the leadership of International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) Local 333 called off a strike that had shut down most of the Port of Baltimore. Dock workers had hit the picket lines three days earlier after voting 517 to 25 to reject a take-back offer from the stevedoring companies' bargaining agent, the Steamship Trade Association (STA). In addition to hardlining it on the new local contract—which sets wages for handling cars and break-bulk cargo as well as all work rules at the port—the STA affiliates have been repeatedly violating existing guidelines in an effort to boost profits at the cost of workers' safety.

One ploy has been to cut the size of work gangs handling containers and other cargo, putting longshoremen who already toil under deadly dangerous conditions at even greater risk from speedup. At the same time, the STA proposed stricter penalties against workers involved in vehicle accidents—that is, firing for the third offense—at the port that conducts the highest volume of automobile trade in the country. Strikers told *Workers Vanguard* that some Baltimore terminals had unilaterally slashed pay rates for loading and unloading automobiles.

The short-lived show of union strength in Baltimore came at a time when longshoremen across the country are under the gun, not least in the Pacific Northwest where grain exporters have locked out International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) members at two terminals. With local contracts open at three other ILA ports on the East and Gulf Coasts, the Baltimore strike had the potential to ripple beyond the city. The union bureaucrats, though, bent over backward to accommodate the bosses, halting the job action after an arbitrator ruled that it violated a no-strike clause in the ILA's Maine-to-Texas master contract with the United States Maritime Alliance (USMX). In fact, they not only submitted to the "cease and desist" order, which applied to containers and some vehicle cargo, but went one better and themselves imposed a 90-day "cooling off" period on the union during which they pledged that *all* cargo would move.

Here is revealed the purpose of supposedly "independent" arbitrators, whose basic role is to stop strikes and enforce class peace, all the better for the bosses to get their way. As a measure of their so-called partnership with the employers, the pro-capitalist union tops first accede to no-strike clauses in contracts and then roll over before the arbitrators who enforce

continued on page 10

Boston Job Action: No Reprisals Against School Bus Drivers!

Ever since Veolia Transportation took over the operation of the Boston Public Schools bus fleet in July, some 700 drivers, organized in United Steel Workers (USW) Local 8751, have endured a steady stream of abuse from this vindictive employer. Trampling on the union contract negotiated by its predecessor, the new management has flouted long-established work rules, including by arbitrarily reassigning routes, and made a practice of shortchanging drivers on their paychecks when finally getting around to distributing them. Such a declaration of war on the unions is nothing new for Veolia, which is part of a multinational conglomerate with its hooks in several major industries across the globe. It is no coincidence that Bay Area Rapid Transit shelled out nearly $400,000 to hring in Veolia's Thomas P. Hock as the chief negotiator with its unions earlier this year and had this notorious outfit run scab shuttles when union members went on strike (see article on page 12).

Boston's embattled school bus drivers, who are largely Haitian, Cape Verdean and Latino, fought back. On the morning of October 8, they reported to work at their assigned hours but refused to board their buses until management agreed to meet with the union. The bosses would have none of it: workers were ordered off company property, and the gates were locked behind them. Pickets went up at all four bus yards in protest, even though the USW district director criminally disavowed the job action. The next day, bus service resumed as Veolia sat down with representatives from Local 8751. Here the union reps presented a list of demands, beginning with "complete and total amnesty" for all members.

In response, the company served letters of suspension to Local 8751 grievance committee chairman Stevan Kirschbaum and vice president Steve Gillis. A few days later, recording secretary Andre Francois and stewards Garry Murchison and Richard Lynch were also suspended. Even as the threat of further reprisals hangs over their heads, the workforce remains unbowed. Large numbers of drivers and other supporters turned out for rallies outside the disciplinary hearing for the "School Bus Union 5" on October 23 and

Boghosian/Boston Globe

Boston, October 8: Stevan Kirschbaum, later suspended by company, addressing drivers as buses sit idle.

28. With Veolia gunning for their jobs, the hearing is scheduled to continue. All Boston city labor should demand: *Reinstate all suspended union officials! No reprisals against bus drivers!*

The city rulers and their kept media have fanned the flames against Local 8751, with Democratic Party mayor Thomas Menino vowing to "make sure this illegal behavior has consequences." Ripping a page from the "red scare" playbook, the mayor especially wants the heads of Kirschbaum and Gillis, who are supported by the reformist Workers World Party (WWP), because they are a "rogue element" and "rabble rousers who cause trouble." In a thinly veiled attempt to stoke the city's ever-glowing embers of anti-black and anti-immigrant hostility, he also berated the workforce as "selfish people who only want to cause disruption in our city." A City Hall aide contemptuously added that "most of these drivers did not know what was going on."

The very opposite is true: the drivers knew the score all too well. They did not fold in the face of Veolia's intransigence or the efforts of the USW regional leadership to squash the walkout. When the Local 8751 president tried to convince the drivers at the Readville bus depot to resume work with nothing to show for their protest by pleading that "we have to do it legally," he was shouted down with cries of "no!" If workers over the years had confined themselves to what the bosses deem legal, as the labor bureaucrats preach, there never would have even been unions in the first place.

The school bus drivers union traces its history back four decades to the fight to integrate Boston's public schools through busing. When these plans were defeated by an alliance of liberals in Congress and howling mobs of racists in the streets, the floodgates were opened to a nationwide assault on school desegregation, foreshadowing the rollback of hard-won civil rights for black people nationwide. (See "As Racist Mobs Rampaged, Liberals and Reformists Knifed Busing," *WV* No. 921, 26 September 2008.)

At the time, the Spartacist League intervened into the struggles to defend busing as a minimal application of the elementary democratic right of black people to equality in education. We called on the integrated union movement, including the city's bus drivers, to mobilize labor/black defense of the besieged black school children. But the WWP and Socialist Workers Party acted as lackeys for black Democratic Party liberals who sought to channel outrage over the racist backlash into calls for state intervention, spreading the illusion that the same capitalist state that murderously repressed black militants could be relied on to defend black rights. Workers World is still very much into burnishing the credentials of black Democrats, such as councilman Charles Yancey, for purportedly "fighting racism and injustice in Boston" (workers.org, 2 December 2007).

Countless defeats have resulted from hitching struggles to the Democratic Party—one of the two main parties of the *class enemy*. Yancey, who accompanied union officials to Veolia offices during the lockout, later announced on his Facebook page that he "DID NOT support the actions taken by the bus drivers." He might take a different posture than the mayor, who wants to strangle Local 8751 and bring back neighborhood schools. Yet "friend of labor" Democrats are no less committed to maintaining the capitalist system of exploitation in which the roots of black oppression are lodged. Avowed socialists who are respected by their co-workers, such as Kirschbaum and Gillis, can help give militant expression to the immediate demands of a workforce. But lacking a program for the political independence of the proletariat, they cannot chart a way forward for the labor movement, much less for getting rid of the system of capitalist wage slavery altogether. ■

The following article originally appeared in Spartacist Canada *No. 178 (Fall 2013), newspaper of our comrades of the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste.*

Quebec Rail Disaster

Lac-Mégantic Industrial Murder

In the early morning hours of July 6, 47 people burned to death in the runaway train explosion at Lac-Mégantic, Quebec. Most were enjoying an evening out at Musi-Café, a popular hangout in the centre of this industrial and tourist town of 6,000 on the southern part of the Chaudière River, near the border with Maine. Ignited by 72 unattended and shoddily designed tank cars of crude oil that rolled down a steep hill and slammed into the town, at least 30 buildings burned to the ground. Many others remain uninhabitable due to soil contamination, while drinking water was tainted by 100,000 litres of crude spilling into the river and the lake.

This tragedy was no accident. It was shaped by money-pinching cutbacks, layoffs and criminal neglect by the Montreal, Maine and Atlantic (MMA) rail company, owned by Edward Burkhardt's Rail World of Chicago. It also arose ineluctably from the drive for profits by the huge Canadian railway conglomerates, and was aided and abetted by the federal government's gutting of safety regulations at the behest of these same rail bosses.

David Charron

July 6: Fireball above Lac-Mégantic, Quebec. Rail bosses' drive for profit produces death and destruction.

About a decade ago, Canadian Pacific [CP] abandoned or sold off unprofitable rail lines in eastern Quebec and New Brunswick to smaller companies like MMA, even though these lines are essential to get products to the Atlantic ports. With the vast expansion of North American oil production, notably in the Alberta tar sands, transport of crude oil by train has now skyrocketed: up from about 500 carloads four years ago to a projected *140,000* this year. The Lac-Mégantic death train was carrying crude from booming North Dakota for processing at the Irving refinery in Saint John, New Brunswick. In 1994, the government's own safety officials warned that 80 percent of the rail tanker fleet was unsafe for carrying oil—yet to this day most shipments are carried in such cars, which have a history of puncturing during accidents. Meanwhile, the government has cut safety inspections across the board, claiming the companies would "self-regulate."

The irrationality of organizing something as essential to society as railways on a for-profit basis has made the rail system a disaster waiting to happen. Last year alone saw 1,011 train accidents in Canada: nearly three a day. Ten days before the Lac-Mégantic inferno, CP management provided a classic instance of corporate arrogance and greed in insisting on running a freight train over a structurally compromised bridge in Calgary in the middle of that city's flood disaster. The ensuing collapse led to a needless diversion of emergency personnel from flood relief. CP CEO Hunter Harrison justified this act of criminal stupidity by saying that if this particular train had not run, this would amount to "jeopardizing commerce."

At the heart of the Lac-Mégantic disaster is the naked pursuit of profit that drives the capitalist system. This system, which serves the interests of a tiny handful of businessmen and financiers, is based on the exploitation of the working class in the factories, mines and transport systems. Incapable of meeting the basic needs of the population, capitalism is a deadly threat to our health and safety. Acts of industrial mass murder such as Lac-Mégantic are written off as collateral damage, accounted for in insurance premiums with the costs fobbed off to small-town governments and the Red Cross—if you're lucky.

Ed Burkhardt and the Destruction of Public Railways

Edward Burkhardt is now deservedly hated throughout Quebec. Initially, the MMA chairman said baldly that he felt no responsibility for the tragedy. Then he hinted at "sabotage" and blamed firefighters in the nearby town of Nantes, where the train started its uncontrolled descent shortly after one of the badly maintained locomotives caught fire. Finally, he blamed and suspended the engineer, Tom Harding, who, as per company policy, had secured the train for the night and was resting in a local hotel when the tragedy occurred.

This further infuriated the people of Lac-Mégantic, who overwhelmingly refused to blame the overworked Anglo Québécois train operator. As one francophone resident put it when Burkhardt visited the town: "He accuses the little guy who is following company orders." The mother of a waitress killed at Musi-Café denounced the MMA chair as "a reckless man" who "played—and he is still playing—with people's lives." A man who lost three relatives said angrily: "I wanted to see the assassin with my own eyes."

As a further slap in the face, MMA proceeded to lay off about 80 workers, including 19 in Quebec. Daniel Roy, Quebec director of the Steelworkers union, which organizes MMA workers, reacted:

> "We were having trouble doing the work we had to do with the numbers we had.... Now with 19 less, people are worried about safety.
> "I'll tell you that there's a lot of worker anger towards the company right now."
> —*Toronto Sun*, 17 July

Having refused to pay a red cent toward the recovery efforts—which will cost upwards of $200 million—MMA has now secured its assets through bankruptcy protection in the U.S. and Canada.

In its ten-year history, this small rail company has set records for accidents and derailments among North American railways. Its rails and signage are so poorly maintained that residents can tell where the CP line ends and MMA starts on the south shore of Montreal. The tracks are so damaged that MMA ordered its operators to slow down to as little as five miles an hour on sections of the line between Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu and Lac-Mégantic! And this is only a small part of the picture for Burkhardt and Rail World, who specialize in "rescuing" rail lines abandoned by governments and bigger railways and then further driving down safety and work conditions.

In 1996, when Burkhardt headed Wisconsin Central, one of his trains carrying flammable materials derailed in Weyauwega, Wisconsin, causing the evacuation of the entire town for 16 days. The crash was caused by a broken switch-point rail that the company had not properly maintained. A year later, a worker in Fond du Lac, also in Wisconsin, was killed when a Wisconsin Central freight train crashed into a factory. Burkhardt went on to head privatized Tranz Rail in New Zealand, which became notorious for its appalling safety and workplace injury record. He bought up four newly privatized rail companies in Britain, setting up the English, Welsh & Scottish Railway and moving to slash the workforce by nearly 40 percent. He also led the privatized Australian Transport Network and, under Rail World, took over former government-owned lines in Estonia, Poland and Ukraine.

Everywhere, this character has used the same methods of slashing wages and safety measures, with predictable results. Burkhardt is particularly notorious for pushing for one-man crews on freight trains. Kevin Moore, chairman of the union that represents MMA workers in Maine, underlined the obvious: "He thinks when you have two people in the cabin, the second person could be a distraction.... I've never seen that. The second person has always been a benefit, not a distraction" (*Globe and Mail*, 21 July). The Tory government in Ottawa obligingly approved one-man operation for MMA's trains in Canada.

While MMA and Rail World are particularly vicious in imposing such measures, they are not an aberration. The Canadian rail bosses' neglect of basic maintenance and safety produces fatality after fatality. The broader toll of industrial death and injury is astronomical. In Ontario, one worker dies from a workplace accident on average every day. Countrywide, about 1,000 workplace deaths are reported annually. The picture is even starker in poor, semicolonial countries: a single factory collapse in Bangladesh earlier this year killed over 1,100 workers [see "Capitalist Profit Drive Kills," *WV* No. 1023, 3 May]. Everywhere, industrial murder is the direct product of the giant capitalist corporations' drive for ever greater profits.

Expropriate the Railways! For a Planned Socialist Economy!

Key to the beginnings of industrialization and used as a tool of "nation-building" in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the history of railway operation in Canada is laid down on a bed of profiteering, corruption, racism and death. In British Columbia [B.C.], at least 600 Chinese migrant labourers, denied any rights and sent on the most dangerous jobs, died in the construction of Canadian Pacific's rail line. Trains buried in avalanches, falling into rivers and other tragedies marked the early years of Canadian rail operations. With the aging of the railways, continued neglect in maintenance and staff cutbacks, avoidable tragedies have continued to this day.

CP and the older Grand Trunk Railway in Eastern Canada (later folded into Canadian National) were born of greed and corruption. John A. Macdonald, the first prime minister, was famously driven from office over bribes taken from rail magnates, only to be re-elected later on. To compensate for their "risks," Canadian Pacific's owners were given thousands of acres of valuable land where no railways were ever built, ensuring enormous profits for generations of capitalist investors.

continued on page 8

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John Bellamy Foster & Co.: "Ecosocialism" Against Marxism

Carrie Ann Naumoff

gofossilfree.org

Left: John Bellamy Foster (standing third from left) at Occupy Wall Street encampment in NYC's Zuccotti Park, October 2011. Right: Rally outside May 16 Regents meeting in Sacramento calls for University of California to divest from fossil fuel companies.

Part One of this article appeared in WV *No. 1032 (18 October).*

PART TWO

In *Marx's Ecology*, John Bellamy Foster contends that green ideologues mistakenly ascribe to Karl Marx positions he did not in fact hold, including that Marx "had an extremely optimistic, cornucopian view of the conditions that would exist in post-capitalist society due to the development of the forces of production under capitalism." Foster goes on to state: "In this interpretation Marx relied so much on the assumption of abundance in his vision of a future society that ecological considerations such as the scarcity of natural resources and external limits to production have vanished."

Focused as he is on transforming Marx into a proto-environmentalist, Foster completely misses the mark in assessing what these critics got wrong. Marx did maintain that a future communist society would be based on the elimination of economic scarcity. But he certainly did *not* think that the forces of production developed under capitalism were sufficient for this purpose. Quite the contrary!

The transition to communism requires a planned, socialized economy to facilitate the development and application of new technologies and thus raise the level of labor productivity ***far above that inherited from capitalism***. It is simply outside Foster's framework that a future socialist society would utilize the most advanced technology in order to redress environmental degradation. But that's not all; he falsely attributes a similar pessimism to Marx, who, he writes, "demonstrates a deep concern for issues of ecological limits and sustainability."

In polemical writing, what is omitted is often just as important as what is explicitly discussed, if not more so. By far the best-known exposition in Marx's writings of the transition from the overthrow of capitalism to a fully communist society is in the 1875 *Critique of the Gotha Programme*. Yet despite two passing references to this work in the 250-plus pages of *Marx's Ecology*, the relevant passages are not taken into consideration.

In the *Critique*, Marx explained that in the initial phase of a socialist society "bourgeois right" would still persist. In other words, the means of consumption allocated to individuals would be proportional to the quantity and quality of their labor:

> "The individual producer receives back from society—after the deductions have been made—exactly what he gives to it.... He receives a certificate from society that he has furnished such and such an amount of labour (after deducting his labour for the common funds), and with this certificate he draws from the social stock of means of consumption as much as the same amount of labour costs. The same amount of labour which he has given to society in one form he receives back in another."

Marx proceeds to describe the conditions enabling society to transcend the principle "to each according to his labor":

> "In a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labour, and thereby also the antithesis between mental and physical labour, has vanished; after labour has become not only a means of life but life's prime want; after the productive forces have also increased with the all-round development of the individual, and all the springs of common wealth flow more abundantly—only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be crossed in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs!"

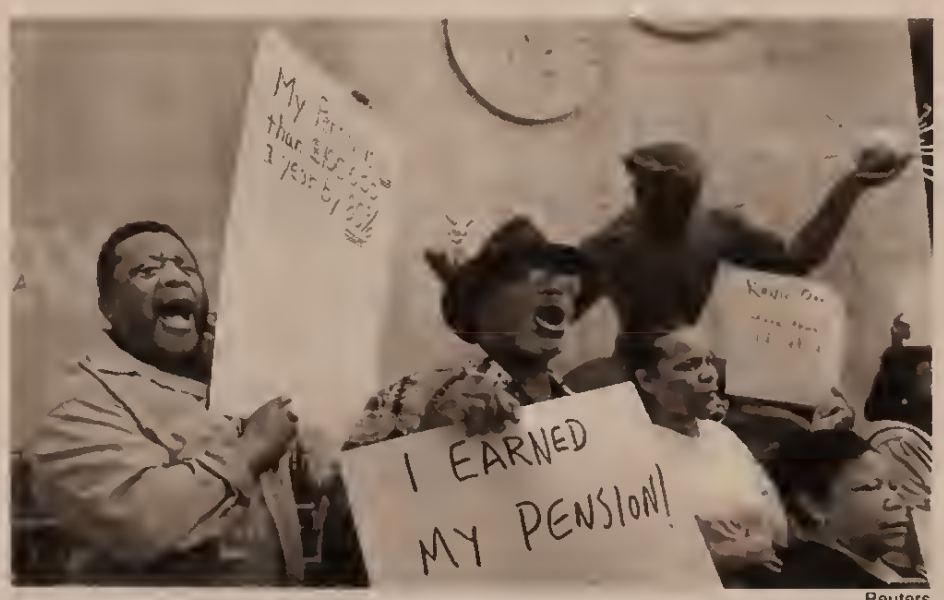
In this work, Marx also indicates how the productivity of labor is to be increased during the transition period. He criticizes the Lassallean program, which holds that the entire social product will be available for the consumption of the direct producers. Instead, a portion of it must be deducted for other purposes, not least the "expansion of production," that is, the construction and utilization of additional means of production embodying the most advanced (labor-saving) technology.

How can Foster reconcile the Marxist vision of a communist society, in which material resources are freely available to all, with his own contention that the *existing* level of production and consumption is rapidly destroying the environmental basis for human life? He can do so only by projecting an eco-socialist society in which "to each according to his needs" is ***substantially less*** than "to each according to his labor" in today's advanced capitalist countries! This program was spelled out by Foster at a gathering of Occupy protesters in New York City in 2011. As reported in *Monthly Review* online (MRZine.org, 29 October 2011), he implored his audience:

> "Move away from a system directed at profits, production, and accumulation, i.e., economic growth, and toward a sustainable steady-state economy. This would mean reducing or eliminating unnecessary and wasteful consumption and reordering society—from commodity production and consumption as its primary goal, to sustainable human development. This could only occur in conjunction with a move towards substantive equality."

What Foster is projecting is a reactionary utopia—the equality of poverty on a global scale. A "steady-state economy" would condemn the hundreds of millions of people in Third World countries to continued impoverishment. This vision of the future is like a right-wing caricature of communism—what used to be derided as "barracks socialism," similar to the condition of uniform equality imposed on conscripts in an army.

Nonetheless, some left-wing activists may respond sympathetically to Foster's argument that working people in the U.S. and other "rich" capitalist countries have to accept a lower standard of living to avert a supposedly looming ecological catastrophe. Yet they are virulently hostile to the right-wing ideologues of the Tea Party, who contend that the American people have to reduce their expenditure on consumption, especially in the case of social programs, to avert a supposedly looming fiscal catastrophe. That Foster denounces capitalism while the Tea Party types extol the "free market" system does not make his program less reactionary, only more seductive.



Reuters

Detroit, August 5: Retired AFSCME members protest cuts to pensions, one of the austerity measures taken amid city's bankruptcy.

Capitalism Is *Not* a "Treadmill of Production"

The basic argument in Foster's *Ecology Against Capitalism* can be stated briefly. Capitalists seek to maximize profits. They therefore produce more and more commodities that embody surplus value, which is extracted through the exploitation of labor. The expansion of production in turn causes the ever-worsening degradation of the environment. Foster writes:

> "Capitalist economies are geared first and foremost to the growth of profits, and hence to economic growth at virtually any cost—including the exploitation and misery of the vast majority of the world's population. This rush to grow generally means rapid absorption of energy and materials and the dumping of more and more wastes into the environment—hence widening environmental degradation."

Why is it, then, that throughout the history of capitalism there have been periods in which production and the employment of labor contract and consequently the volume of profits decreases? For example, between 2005 and 2009 the gross (before tax) profits of U.S. corporations declined by 10 percent, from $1.610 to $1.456 trillion. Profits in manufacturing fell especially steeply, from $247 to $125 billion.

The answer is that capitalists seek to maximize not the volume of profits but rather the rate of profit, or return on capital. Using Marxist terminology, this

continued on page 6

Foster & Co....

(continued from page 5)

rate is the ratio of surplus value over the value of the means of production (plant and equipment) necessary to set labor into motion at the prevailing level of productivity. The rate of profit is the *main regulator* of capitalist production in both its expansion and contraction phases.

During a period of expansion, the rate of profit tends to fall. Increased demand for labor pushes up wage rates. The effects of increasing labor productivity through investment in new technologies gradually diminish. Increased investment drives up the market price of capital goods. Financial speculation further inflates the market value of capital, contributing to much faster increases in the price of corporate stocks compared to the earnings of the underlying firms.

At a certain point, capitalists therefore cut back on new investment. The overall economy then enters a period of contraction. As Marx explained in Volume III of *Capital*:

> "Not too much wealth is produced. But at times too much wealth is produced in its capitalistic, self-contradictory forms. "The limitations of the capitalist mode of production come to the surface: "1) In that the development of the productive power of labour creates out of the falling rate of profit a law which at a certain point comes into antagonistic conflict with this development and must be overcome constantly through crises. "2) In that the expansion or contraction of production are determined by...profit and the proportion of this profit to the employed capital, thus by a definite rate of profit, rather than by the relation of production to social requirements, i.e., to the requirements of socially developed human beings."

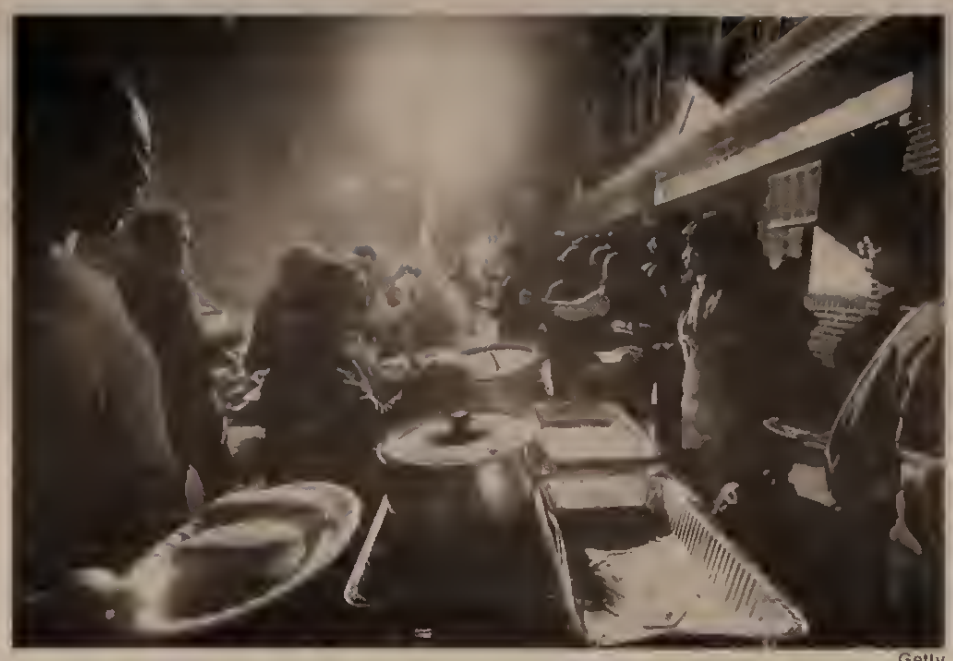
Keynesian Economics in Pseudo-Marxist Garb

In *The Endless Crisis*, Foster purports to provide a Marxist analysis of the post-2008 global economic downturn and, more generally, the contradictions of present-day capitalism. While using some Marxist terminology, his analysis actually corresponds to the main current of liberal reformism in the U.S. associated with the doctrines and policies of the late British economist John Maynard Keynes. Foster maintains that the income of the lower classes is insufficient to purchase the output of goods under capitalism. He writes:

> "The system is confronted with insufficient effective demand—with barriers to consumption leading eventually to barriers to investment. Growing excess capacity serves to shut off new capital formation, since corporations are not eager to invest in new plant and equipment when substantial portions of their existing capacity are idle."

In the terminology of bourgeois economics, this view can be categorized as an "underconsumptionist" theory of cyclical downturns.

In outlining his argument, Foster makes no reference to the rate of profit. As we have seen, during a period of expansion this tends to fall. Therefore, capitalists can sell the increased volume of commodities only at a price reflecting a lower rate of profit. From the capitalists' standpoint, this condition appears to be one of "overproduction" or "over-capacity." They cut back on new investment, plunging the economy into a period of contraction until a higher rate of profit is restored by factors prevailing during the downturn—wage rates tend to fall, likewise the market value of capital.



Getty

12 November 2012: Two weeks after Superstorm Sandy, residents of the Rockaways, New York, line up in dark for donated food. Weeks went by before power was restored.

The theory that the basic cause of cyclical downturns is a dearth of consumer demand relative to productive capacity did not originate in the era of monopolistic capitalism. The crux of this theory can be traced back to certain leading exponents of classical British bourgeois economic doctrines in the early 19th century, notably Thomas Malthus. Anticipating Foster by two centuries, Malthus argued: "No power of consumption on the part of the labouring classes can ever alone furnish an encouragement to the employment of capital" (quoted in Mark Blaug, *Economic Theory in Retrospect* [Cambridge University, 1997]).

In Volume III of *Capital*, Marx rejected all underconsumptionist/over-productionist theories then current. He stated:

> "There are not too many necessities of life produced, in proportion to the existing population. Quite the reverse. Too little is produced to decently and humanely satisfy the wants of the great mass.... "Too many means of labour and necessities of life are produced at times to permit of their serving as means for the exploitation of labourers at a certain rate of profit."

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, the underconsumptionist theory was revived and popularized by Keynes, who claimed Malthus as an intellectual forerunner. The root cause of the contraction of production was, according to this doctrine, a lack of "effective demand." Keynes and his followers advocated that the shortfall in effective demand be made up by increased government spending on public works and social programs beneficial to working people (e.g., unemployment insurance, old-age pensions, socialized medicine, income transfers to the poor). This old-line Keynesian program is propagated in the U.S. today by the liberal economist Paul Krugman in his *New York Times* columns. If, as Foster (in line with Keynes and Krugman) contends, the cause of the economic downturn is a lack of effective demand, then expanded deficit spending would be effective in restoring production to full capacity, with full employment of labor.

However, throughout the capitalist world, government policies are moving in just the opposite direction. Fiscal austerity is the order of the day from Obama's America to Cameron's Britain, Merkel's Germany and the entire euro zone. Krugman explains the drive for fiscal austerity as a triumph of right-wing ideology over economic good sense. In a piece in the *New York Review of Books* (6 June) titled "How the Case for Austerity Has Crumbled," he asserts: "The case for austerity was and is one that many powerful people want to believe, leading them to seize on anything that looks like a justification."

In fact, fiscal austerity does serve the interests of the capitalist class. Cuts to government-provided social programs reduce the overhead costs of production

Bettmann

British economist John Maynard Keynes, 1929.

broadly defined and therefore contribute to a higher rate of profit. It is crucial for the working masses to wage class struggle to beat back this austerity offensive. In the course of such struggles, workers must be won to the understanding that the tendency toward immiseration of the proletariat will be ended only with the expropriation of the expropriators through socialist revolution.

Climate Change in Perspective

As Marxist opponents of the capitalist order, our role is not to serve as economic advisers to the bourgeoisie. Rather, we strive to educate the working class about its historic interest in sweeping away capitalism and establishing its own class rule. The reformist "socialists" are die-hard opponents of this program. With the destruction of the Soviet Union—a catastrophe that was hailed by the International Socialist Organization (ISO) and many others—they have increasingly junked even a hypocritical posture toward the goal of getting rid of capitalism. And now they have latched on to the cause of "climate justice" to urge the capitalist exploiters to moderate their behavior. As ISO climate-change guru Chris Williams baldly put it: "Uniting social and ecological demands into one unified movement independent of mainstream politicians has the power to change state policy at the national level" (*Socialist Worker*, 26 June). This is the calling card of the System Change Not Climate Change (SCNCC) coalition, in which the ISO is a driving force.

It is true that the Earth as a whole today is hotter than it was a century ago, and human activity—e.g., the combustion of fossil fuels—is largely responsible for the growing atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. One authoritative scientific review noted: "Through his worldwide industrial civilization, Man is unwittingly conducting a vast geophysical experiment. Within a few generations he is burning the fossil fuels that slowly accumulated in the earth over the past 500 million years. The CO2 produced by this combustion is being injected into the atmosphere; about half of it remains there." It continues: "The climatic changes that may be produced by the increased CO2 content could be deleterious from the point of view of human beings." This report, "Restoring the Quality of Our Environment," was submitted to the Johnson administration in 1965.

The experiment continues to this day. For environmentalists, the answer is to cut industrial civilization down to size and keep fossil fuels in the ground. For Marxists, it is to replace the unwitting conduct with conscious and informed planning. One must also keep in mind that the ultimate impact of the current warming trend, which encompasses a wide range of possibilities and could vary significantly from place to place, is not much more definitively known today than it was a half century ago.

The eco-socialists, though, hold aloft the most calamitous projections as scientific gospel. At the Left Forum held in New York City this June, several speakers referred to climate change as the worst crisis humanity has ever faced. Foster's comments at its closing plenary were titled "The Epochal Crisis." *Nation* writer Christian Parenti even invoked the runaway greenhouse effect that transformed Venus into the hottest planet in the solar system. Far from a clarion call to uproot production for private profit, such fear-mongering has one purpose: to sell various schemes for rolling back the use of hydrocarbons under capitalism.

Current climate change may or may not pose a sustained, long-term threat to human society. As long as the capitalist masters call the shots, it truly is a roll of the dice. Environmental degradation is just one of a host of problems, many far more pressing, linked to the workings of the capitalist system: unemployment and extreme poverty, mass starvation, imperialist military adventures and conquest, the reinforcing of social backwardness (interethnic bloodletting, the subjugation of women in the family, etc.), to name a few. Without a doubt, the gravest threat to mankind is the nuclear arsenal in the hands of the U.S. imperialist overlords. Even a regional nuclear war, say between India and Pakistan, could wipe out many millions of people while making the Earth a colder, hungrier planet.

To elevate climate change above all else is a convenient excuse for joining hands with the bourgeoisie—the very class behind *all* these crimes. Counting carbon as a measure of progressive policy is its corollary. For the 800,000 years preceding recorded human history, the atmospheric carbon dioxide level never exceeded 300 parts per million (ppm); today it is around 400 ppm. By comparison, in the Jurassic period when the dinosaurs reigned supreme, the concentration was likely in the neighborhood of 2,000 ppm. According to Foster:

> "We need to go down to 350 parts per million, which means very big social transformations on a scale that would be considered revolutionary by anybody in society today—transformation of our whole society quite fundamentally. We have to aim at that, and we have to demand that of our society. Forget about capitalism, forget about whether the system can do it. Don't let that be your barometer. Say this is necessary for the planet, for human survival, for justice, for environmental justice, and we just have to do it."
>
> —MRZine.org (30 October 2008)

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One of the more active climate-justice groups based in the U.S. today is named 350.org. Despite the popularity of this numerology, decades of scientific probing of the extremely complex climate system have yet to pinpoint a carbon threshold that, if surpassed, would trigger an insoluble crisis.

By the carbon barometer, Superstorm Sandy was a blessing in disguise when it turned out the lights in the Northeast U.S., as is the Great Recession that has brought empty pockets to countless working people around the world. Likewise, capitalist Germany should be widely lauded for the more than 20 percent drop in its carbon dioxide emissions over the last two decades. Today, a quarter of the country's total energy on average comes from so-called renewable sources—and nearly half on especially sunny days. But it still has a ways to go to match the per capita "carbon footprint" of France, where nuclear fission is the primary source of energy. These two mainstays of the imperialist European Union have in recent years squeezed the working class of Europe dry and put dependent countries like Greece through the wringer.

Some eco-socialist activists might blanch at the more distasteful implications of judging everything by carbon content. But support to reduced living standards is a part of that framework. A case in point is the carbon tax. By the ISO's estimation, proposed legislation from Senators Barbara Boxer and Bernie Sanders that would impose a carbon fee on fossil fuel enterprises at the source (the mine, wellhead or port of entry) in order to fund renewable energy and similar technology "points in the right direction." The bill proposes to return some of the revenues to consumers to offset the higher prices that would result when companies pass on the cost of the tax to the public. Even so, this dividend would not cover the difference, bringing an increase in the cost of living for working people and the poor. Meanwhile, the corporations producing energy, no matter the source, will keep on rolling in money. No less an interested party than ExxonMobil has recently announced support for "a well-designed, revenue-neutral carbon tax."

We are far from indifferent to climate change, whatever its timetable and consequences. But our primary concern is human civilization, and we are implacably hostile to its greatest enemy: the U.S. capitalist ruling class. Nothing good will come from advising these plunderers of the world on how to best generate energy. Instead, the proletariat must expropriate capitalist industry and put it at the service of society as a whole.

As we wrote in Part One of "Capitalism and Global Warming" (*WV* No. 965, 24 September 2010):

> "When the workers of the world rule, energy will be generated and used in the most rational, efficient and safe manner possible, including by developing new energy sources. We do not rule out in advance the use of fossil fuels or any other energy source—nuclear, hydroelectric, solar, wind, etc. Simply to promote modernization and all-round development in the Third World, where today billions are locked in desperate poverty, would almost certainly involve *far greater* energy production on a global scale."

Even if fossil fuels have not been completely phased out, a world liberated from the profit motive will have many arrows in its quiver to exert a positive influence on the climate. For example, a concerted effort could be undertaken to retool energy production and other industries and transform their operations to minimize greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate the impact of warming.

Fossil Fuels and Pressure Politics

The politics of the ISO's eco-socialist gaggle boil down to run-of-the-mill environmentalism. The "system change, not climate change" slogan was appropriated from the direct-action wing of the environmental movement. First popularized at the December 2009 protests outside the United Nations climate talks in Copenhagen, it is purposely ambiguous in order to draw in the greatest number of activists under its banner. In the green milieu, the proposed "system change" runs the full gamut of environmentalist remedies, from curbing economic growth and discouraging the "culture of consumption" to "leaving fossil fuels in the ground" and abandoning automobiles.

350.org

April 3: 350.org protest against Keystone XL pipeline outside Obama fundraiser in San Francisco.

The SCNCC has opted to focus its activity on "the struggle for a fossil fuel-free world," that is, pressuring the capitalist Democratic Party to wean the U.S. economy off of hydrocarbons. To much fanfare, President Barack Obama in June unveiled his "climate action plan" to curb greenhouse gas emissions, which included ordering the Environmental Protection Agency to work out new standards to limit the carbon dioxide dumped into the atmosphere by coal-fired power plants. In response, Republicans in Congress and industry magnates decried the supposed "war on coal" and warned of higher electricity costs for the mass of the population. Unions such as the United Mine Workers were angry that the plan did not even give lip service to the hardship and suffering in store for coal miners, utility workers and their families.

Although many mainstream environmentalists were jubilant, the SCNCC did not "celebrate President Obama's speech." In a July 4 statement titled "We Need a Real Plan for the Planet," the SCNCC lamented that the proposed measures "do not go nearly far enough" and counseled the White House: "Instead of an 'all of the above' energy policy, we should direct massive and exclusive funding toward renewable energy sources like wind and solar."

To argue that one source of energy is more sensible than another under the profit-driven capitalist system and its anarchic relations of production is playing with fire. Touted as a means to reduce carbon emissions, the U.S. corn ethanol biofuels racket provoked a shortfall in the food grain harvest five years ago, helping trigger a global food crisis. Solar is not without its own risks. Both the mining and processing of rare-earth metals for solar panels, and the very process of their manufacture, produce tremendous amounts of toxic sludge and contaminants that have poisoned water supplies, while the chemicals involved in making the panels pose additional hazards to workers.

A current hobbyhorse of the eco-socialists is the northern leg of the 1,700-mile Keystone XL pipeline, which would carry oil from the Alberta tar sands in Canada to the U.S. Gulf Coast. President Obama has yet to grant approval for the section crossing the border. Supporters of Keystone consider the project key to U.S. imperialism achieving "energy independence" from Near Eastern oil; environmentalists portray it as a doomsday device.

A February anti-Keystone rally in Washington, D.C., organized by the Sierra Club and 350.org attracted tens of thousands of protesters. The week before, the ISO's *Socialist Worker* (12 February) held

AP

31 January 2007: Mexico City protest against rising price of tortillas. Increased production of corn ethanol biofuels helped trigger a global food crisis.

out hope that this "historic event" would "send a message to the Obama administration that the time has come for real action on environmental issues." The White House welcomes such messages, as the Commander-in-Chief made clear in his June speech on climate change: "What we need in this fight are citizens who will stand up, and speak up, and compel us to do what this moment demands." And there you have it: the presidential seal of approval on the latest "grassroots movement."

As to the Keystone XL pipeline, there is no reason for Marxists to either support or oppose it. In general, oil pipelines serve a socially useful function of transporting fuel. But cutting corners to boost profit margins—the name of the game for the energy barons—is deadly business. Some Native Americans oppose the pipeline out of legitimate concern that a spill would contaminate water sources that supply their reservations. By all accounts, shoddy construction, poor welds and substandard materials are features of the existing Keystone pipeline. What's needed are fighting unions that can exert control over safety standards and practices (see "Lac-Mégantic Industrial Murder," page 4).

Our position on the Keystone XL pipeline reflects a norm for matters relating to bourgeois energy policy. But it is not universal. In the case of the Northern Gateway pipeline, which is to run from Alberta to the British Columbia coast, our Canadian comrades rightly oppose the project, although not due to the arithmetic of greenhouse gas numbers or other environmental considerations. Rather, the proposed construction brazenly flouts the land rights of the Native peoples who are the predominant population in the remote regions that the pipeline would traverse.

Going Green on Wall Street

To the delight of the eco-socialist crowd, a gimmicky "Do the Math" speaking tour by 350.org founder Bill McKibben last year popularized calls for divesting from coal, oil and gas producers. The divestment effort has since spread to over 300 campuses around the country and found a hearing among a range of city mayors. To date, six campuses and 18 U.S. cities, including Seattle and San Francisco, have pledged to liquidate holdings in such companies.

In its article "Divest to Save the Planet" (*Socialist Worker*, 13 March), the ISO enthuses: "The struggle for divestment is part of a shift among activists away from calls for lifestyle changes and marks a new focus on the systemic nature of climate change." In fact, this "struggle" consists of the very same strategy of moral suasion, only now directed at campus administrations and city governments. In the name of "movement building," the ISO & Co. have thrown in their lot with a corporate-funded effort to greenwash capitalist exploitation.

The divestment campaign was orchestrated in consultation with the "progressive" Wall Street investor group Ceres. This standard-bearer of green capitalism has recently garnered support from nearly 700 companies, including General Motors and Microsoft, for a declaration that "climate change is one of America's greatest economic opportunities of the 21st century." Among its suggestions to fund managers is to move money into natural resources and infrastructure in "emerging markets"—i.e., promoting imperialist capital penetration into and control over the semicolonial world. Small wonder that McKibben was given a place of honor at the 2013 Ceres Conference, which drew the likes of JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America, Citi, Con Edison, Bloomberg, Sprint and Ford.

Amid a recent spate of criticisms of McKibben within the green milieu, the ISO's Williams rushed to his defense in a three-part commentary titled "Questions for the Movement" (socialistworker.org, 24-26 September). Although mainly preoccupied with rationalizing the active participation of ostensible socialists in selling capitalist investment strategies (the answer has something to do with "the internal dynamics of social movements"), Williams does allow that "McKibben continues to vacillate as to whether Barack Obama and the Democratic Party can be part of the climate solution." He then proceeds to lament the six years of "hot air of no real consequence" coming from the White House, whose current occupant urged in his June speech: "Invest. Divest. Remind folks there's no contradiction between a sound environment and strong economic growth."

It was not so long ago that Williams himself was full of hope for Obama. In the "Real Solutions Right Now" chapter of his book *Ecology and Socialism* (Haymarket, 2010), Williams sketched "a government action plan on the environment" and offered: "A program such as this could even get couched as 'a Green New Deal for the Twenty-First Century—good for the planet, good for people, good for profits.'

continued on page 8

Foster & Co....

(continued from page 7)

These proposals could *theoretically* be carried out under capitalist social relations through governmental regulation, particularly by a proactive and forward-thinking Obama administration" (emphasis in original). Reflexively, Williams adds, "Reforms that are theoretically possible under capitalism won't be made because they 'make sense,' but because the politicians are forced to implement them."

That's the ISO (and other reformists) in a nutshell: seeking to pressure the capitalist government through the agency of the Democratic Party. Or, as in the ISO's SCNCC activity, embracing Green Party politicians to the same effect. The fact that its Green Party allies eschew even paper-thin pretensions to socialism never mattered much to the ISO, which has even run candidates on the ticket of this bourgeois party.

Earth First! Humboldt

7 August 2012: Earth First! primitivists block logging truck in California.

"Green" Jobs and the Labor Movement

Green radicalism grew out of the New Left's counterculture wing, which was deeply hostile to Marxism and the organized labor movement. These environmental activists advocated a dismantling of modern industrial society while expressing nothing but disdain for the working class. One prominent outfit was Earth First!, which at its 1980 founding pledged, "No compromise in defense of Mother Earth!" Its efforts included driving spikes into trees to break chain saws, a practice that put the lives and limbs of lumberjacks at risk. In road blockades outside pulp mills, eco-radicals would confront truckers and chant: "There are no jobs on a dead planet!"

This sentiment, if not the slogan itself, is today given a "worker friendly" spin by some green apostles looking for converts in the labor bureaucracy. In a September 8 letter to AFL-CIO head Richard Trumka on the eve of the union federation's convention, 350.org and over 60 like-minded groups pleaded: "We must shift from Jobs vs. Environment, to Jobs for the Environment." The "Green New Deal" promulgated by the ISO's Williams and other SCNCC eco-socialists is cut of the same cloth. Its purpose is to mask the fact that they would have jobs slashed in entire industries, even as they seek more employment in favored areas.

Extracting and processing fossil fuels is dangerous work. But a "green job" is not inherently preferable. Reflecting fears within the American ruling class that it stands to lose out in innovation and cutting-edge manufacturing to China, the Obama administration has devoted tens of billions of dollars of stimulus money to renewable energy and projects to increase energy efficiency. As a result, employment in the solar industry and the rest of the "green economy" has steadily climbed. Poor wages, benefits and working conditions prevail in these industries, with wages at many solar panel and wind turbine plants below the national average for manufacturing. Few of the workers are unionized.

One group of 62 black workers on the front lines of the "green economy" filed a racial discrimination lawsuit in 2008 against their employer, a General Electric subsidiary. The work team traveled the country, changing air filters that capture toxic particulates at power plants and other industrial sites. They were forced to work extra hours, denied adequate protection from the dangerous matter they handled and heaped with racist abuse. If the crew tried to take a break when the heat or soot became unbearable, they were derided as lazy "n-----s" and threatened with firing.

Making a "Green New Deal" with America's bourgeois masters will do nothing to reverse the devastation of working people. Rather, it will take hard class struggle against the rapacious exploiters, including a vigorous campaign by labor to organize the mass of unorganized workers in the "green economy" and elsewhere in industry.

For International Proletarian Revolution!

If "capitalism is killing the planet," as the SCNCC proclaims, then the ISO and its associates are doing their small part to set up the hit. We value the wonders of the natural world; however, we do not deify nature. Marxists approach the issue of climate change from the standpoint of its potential impact on human society, not preserving some imaginary natural order. Indeed, the climate, with or without humans, is constantly changing, sometimes more rapidly, sometimes less so.

From the dawn of man, our ancestors have left an imprint on the natural world, as it has on mankind. In his book *Plows, Plagues, and Petroleum* (Princeton, 2005), climate scientist William Ruddiman notes:

> "Advocates for the environment often frame their positions with high-minded, preachy appeals to Jean Jacques Rousseau's notion of the 'noble savage,' the concept of a primitive but wise people who once lived lightly on the land and in complete harmony with the environment. They contrast this supposedly once-pristine world with the evils of heavy industrial development during the last two centuries. They portray industrial development as the first, and only, real human assault on nature....
>
> "The concept of a pristine natural world is a myth: preindustrial cultures had long had a major impact on the environment."

Basically, it all started with agriculture.

Although John Bellamy Foster does not openly invoke the "noble savage," in his version of socialist society "it will be necessary for us to live lightly on the Earth," as he commented some years back. But precisely what separates humans out from other animals is our capacity to perform work and transform the world around us to serve our ends. In the 1883 Introduction to *Dialectics of Nature*, Friedrich Engels cogently observed: "Man alone has succeeded in impressing his stamp on nature, not only by shifting the plant and animal world from one place to another, but also by so altering the aspect and climate of his dwelling place, and even the plants and animals themselves, that the consequences of his activity can disappear only with the general extinction of the terrestrial globe."

Nature certainly would not reciprocate if mankind were to suddenly "live lightly." Disease and pestilence, droughts and wildfires, floods and tsunamis, hurricanes and tornadoes, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, meteor showers and gamma-ray bursts: all these features of life on Earth and more would remain. A human society that scales back technological development in the name of protecting the environment will be placed at nature's mercy.

The way forward is a qualitative development of the world's productive forces in an international federation of workers states. Only then can scarcity be eliminated—the precondition for the disappearance of classes and the withering away of the state. With the mass of the population no longer struggling day-to-day to survive and with modern technique, science, culture and education available to all, there would be an explosion in human creativity. Man's stewardship of the Earth would grow by leaps and bounds.

When production is planned and directed at satisfying human need and not the profit motive, environmental considerations can be given their proper due. The vast expansion in knowledge, technologies and resources will put mankind in position to anticipate and prepare for whatever curveballs the natural world throws at it. Increasing abundance would also eliminate the material factors—and backward social values, such as those expounded by religions—that fuel population growth. No longer will poor peasants and agricultural workers be compelled to have more children in order to ensure enough manpower to work the land. The division between town and country as well as economic dependence on the family will be overcome.

To bring about a communist society, the rule of capital must first be broken, in this country and beyond. Engels elaborated in *Anti-Dühring* (1878): "To accomplish this act of universal emancipation is the historical mission of the modern proletariat. To thoroughly comprehend the historical conditions and thus the very nature of this act, to impart to the now oppressed class a full knowledge of the conditions and of the meaning of the momentous act it is called upon to accomplish, this is the task of the theoretical expression of the proletarian movement, scientific socialism."■

Quebec...

(continued from page 4)

The federal government has always doled out grants and enacted policies which guaranteed that money would keep flowing to the rail barons. But provincial and municipal governments have dirty hands as well. In B.C., the highly believable corruption allegations surrounding the sale of government-owned B.C. Rail by the Gordon Campbell Liberals in the early 2000s have not been refuted. As for the Quebec government, its Caisse de Dépôt investment fund invested a cool seven million dollars in (now practically worthless) shares of MMA alone!

From the perspective of the working class, central responsibility for allowing the unending cutbacks, layoffs and criminal indifference to safety pushed by the bosses lies with the trade-union bureaucracy, which has in the main accepted such measures without a fight. Often hiding behind government intervention (railway strikes are usually legislated back to work rapidly), and working with their allies in the social-democratic NDP [New Democratic Party], the union tops work to promote "labour peace" and the national interests of Canadian capitalism. What's required is a perspective of hard class struggle against the railway bosses and the government that stands behind them, including by rallying the labour movement when necessary to defy back-to-work laws. A single winning Canada-wide rail strike would do vastly more for safety than tens of thousands of pages of Transportation Safety Board recommendations!

Reuters

Port Coquitlam, British Columbia: Teamsters picket Canadian Pacific rail yard. May 2012 strike by 4,800 workers shut down CP rail operations for seven days.

Various petty-bourgeois environmentalists, echoed by self-styled "ecosocialists," have sought to divert anger over the Lac-Mégantic disaster into campaigns against the transport of fossil fuels. The idea that a modern industrial society could currently do without oil and gas is a utopian fantasy, whose actual consequences would be retrograde for workers and the poor. Everything from food production to construction, transportation and manufacturing industries requires vast quantities of energy. Oil and gas need to be transported, whether by pipelines, trains, trucks or otherwise. The crucial issue for the working class is that this be done *safely*. That requires strong union power in all the industries concerned, including union safety committees able to shut down operations at any point.

Ultimately, the safe and productive use of natural resources for the benefit of the entire human race can only be ensured once the bourgeois rulers are overthrown. As our comrades of the Spartacist League/U.S. wrote following the massive British Petroleum oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010, in which eleven oil workers (and many cleanup employees) died and which caused irreparable environmental damage:

> "Industrial murder and environmental devastation are endemic to the workings of the capitalist system. Only when the working class rips industry from the hands of the capitalists and establishes a planned socialist economy on a world scale will the enormous resources of the planet be put to use for all of humanity. When the workers rule, technology and productive resources will be expanded to overcome scarcity and provide a decent life for all. The fight for a socialist future requires forging revolutionary workers parties that will lead all the exploited and oppressed in proletarian revolution."
>
> —"Gulf Coast Disaster: Capitalist Profit Drive Kills," *WV* No. 961, 2 July 2010■

Abortion...

(continued from page 12)

to terminate her pregnancy at whatever time, in whatever way, and for whatever reason she alone chooses. With this we do not agree."

To make crystal clear what the court meant, the ruling referenced the case *Buck v. Bell*. That 1927 decision endorsed the racist, anti-poor eugenics theories that states used to justify sterilization of men and women. Tens of thousands were sterilized across the country in the 20th century, often on the specious grounds of "imbecility." California, which sterilized more people than any other state, has overturned its eugenics laws, like other states. Yet it has been exposed for having recently sterilized female prisoners.

The majority ruling in *Roe v. Wade* specified measures that could be taken by states to regulate abortions after the first trimester, among them:

> "Requirements as to the qualifications of the person who is to perform the abortion; as to the licensure of that person; as to the facility in which the procedure is to be performed, that is, whether it must be a hospital or may be a clinic or some other place of less-than-hospital status; as to the licensing of the facility; and the like."

That list has become, in the hands of the anti-abortionists, a veritable "How To" Guide for restricting women's right to abortion.

The legislative assault on abortion rights by Republican-controlled state governments in recent years has been even more effective in rolling back abortion rights than the bombings and assassinations carried out by anti-abortion terrorists in the 1990s. Over the past three years, abortion providers have been forced to shut down at the fastest rate since the time of *Roe v. Wade*. According to a survey by the *Huffington Post*, since 2010 at least 54 clinics have closed down or stopped providing abortion services. Today, fully 97 percent of rural counties in the country have no abortion services whatsoever.

In the face of this reactionary offensive, it is not difficult for Democrats to be viewed as defenders of abortion rights. Texas state senator Wendy Davis became a nationwide sensation by mounting a filibuster that delayed passage of an omnibus anti-abortion bill. The bill contains almost every one of the attacks on abortion rights that have been adopted by various states in recent years. It bans abortion after 20 weeks due to supposed "fetal pain"; requires abortion doctors to have hospital admitting privileges; prohibits doctors from phoning prescriptions to pharmacies, thus making women visit a clinic for medication doses in early-term abortions; requires clinics to upgrade their buildings to meet the standards for ambulatory care centers (i.e., they must make medically irrelevant but expensive changes that will put some clinics out of business). On October 28, a federal judge ruled the part of the Texas law concerning admitting privileges to be unconstitutional. Part of the anti-abortionist strategy is to get a test case before the Supreme Court in hopes of overturning the *Roe* ruling.

WV Photo

Spartacist League joined 2,000 others in defending abortion clinics in Washington, D.C., against anti-abortion terrorists of Operation Rescue, January 1992.

White opposing such laws like the one in Texas, the Democratic Party does not even pretend to fight for anything beyond preserving *Roe v. Wade*, which legalized abortion but did not make it generally available. Like all aspects of health care, access to abortion reflects the class divisions and racial discrimination that are inherent in U.S. capitalist society. Over two-thirds of the women who have abortions are poor, and black and Hispanic women are more than twice as likely as white women to experience unwanted pregnancies and to have abortions. What was and is needed is mass struggle to ensure that poor and working women have unrestricted access to abortion. For the rights to abortion and contraception to mean anything, the services must be free.

AP

September 2012: Protesters outside meeting of Virginia Board of Health, which was pressured by state attorney general Ken Cuccinelli to impose building regulations for hospitals on women's health care facilities.

Bourgeois feminists have never intended to launch such a struggle because their framework is limited to seeking legal reforms through the agency of the Democrats. Despite their pro-choice rhetoric, Democrats have in fact helped restrict access to abortion for working and poor women. Soon after the *Roe* decision, it came under attack by Democratic president Jimmy Carter, who signed the Hyde Amendment eliminating abortion coverage under Medicaid, which all but deprived poor women of the service. The Hyde Amendment has been renewed every year since, regardless of which party sits in the White House.

We say the state has no right to interfere in the reproductive or sexual lives of women and call for free abortion on demand. The fight for abortion rights must be part of a broader struggle for free, quality health care for all. Decent health care is a burning need for all working people, with employers in recent years gutting the health plans that unionized workers had won in the struggles of earlier decades. But the fealty of the labor bureaucrats to the parties of capital, especially the Democrats, undermines this and every other necessary struggle.

Religious Bigots Target Women's Rights

Directly after Tiller's murder, a "fetal pain" law was crafted specifically to drive Dr. Carhart out of business and out of the state of Nebraska. Such laws are based on a cynical hoax. The idea that pain can be felt by a fetus at 20 weeks after gestation has been dismissed by every reputable medical association that has commented on the issue. The passage of that 2010 bill was a watershed victory for the anti-abortionists. Twelve more states have since passed similar legislation.

After Tiller shows the lead-up to the passage of the Nebraska bill and the travails of the Carharts as they tried to relocate afterward. They moved to Maryland, where the law allows late-term abortions under certain conditions, but the anti-abortionists there protested Dr. Carhart's arrival. They even organized a picket of the middle school attended by the clinic landlord's daughter.

A similar "fetal pain" measure is on a November municipal ballot in Albuquerque, New Mexico. That city has been specifically targeted in an attempt to close down the clinic where Dr. Robinson and Dr. Selfa work, as seen in the film. The push for its passage has been accompanied by an increase in intimidation. On the weekend of August 10, "Survivors of the Abortion Holocaust" held a "training camp" in Albuquerque during which an abortion doctor's house was besieged, trapping his family inside.

Another prong of the anti-abortionists' pitchfork is the campaign for "fetal rights" laws. These have been adopted by some states as a means to persecute pregnant women for activities that are often harmless to the woman and the fetus, e.g., smoking marijuana. In recent years, hundreds of women across the country have been detained, arrested or forced to accept medical procedures in the name of "fetal protection." The president of the anti-abortion outfit Operation Rescue has gloated: "We win every time we establish the precedent that the unborn child in the womb is a unique human individual."

As Marxist materialists, we reject the idealist notion—ultimately derived from religion—that a fetus is a human with a "soul." Since a fetus and the mother are biologically united during pregnancy, all attempts to endow the fetus with rights come at the expense of those of the mother.

The religious reaction and family-values bigotry that have come to dominate the general social climate in this country make it much harder, especially for teenagers, to avoid pregnancy and to obtain an abortion. Sex education is either woeful or a pack of lies. Parental notification rules for teen abortions are another hurdle. Teen access to contraception is often restricted. Two years ago, the Obama administration blocked easy access by young women under the age of 17 to the morning-after pill, subsequently reversing itself under pressure. The net result is that the U.S. teen pregnancy rate is one of the highest in the developed world, more than twice as high as that in Canada and five times that in Sweden.

After Tiller compellingly relates the stories of individual women who sought late-term abortions. Some had wanted to be pregnant until they learned of severe fetal abnormalities. Others could not find the time or money to make arrangements for abortions before the deadline in their states. One woman had to wait for her tax rebate. One teenager was terrified of telling her religious parents. An older woman had light periods and a negative pregnancy test and so did not know that she was pregnant. In the film, Dr. Robinson rejects the idea that a woman has to have a good story to justify her abortion. She notes that her only criterion is medical safety because women "are the world's expert on their own lives."

The Family: Key Institution of Women's Oppression

The *Roe* ruling took place against the backdrop of broad social struggles in the U.S. From the civil rights movement to the anti-Vietnam war movement, wide sections of the population were demanding significant social and political changes. The capitalist rulers felt pressure to grant some reforms. The apex of the gains for women won in this period was the *Roe* ruling, which has been under legislative attack ever since.

In the 1980s, Ronald Reagan packed the Supreme Court with conservatives in order to reverse the gains of the social struggles of the 1960s and early '70s. A 1992 court decision left *Roe* in place but granted extra rights to states to extend waiting periods for abortions and enforce parental consent for teenagers. In the words of the chief justice at the time, that ruling made *Roe* "a sort of judicial Potemkin Village." These assaults have continued to this day under both Republican and Democratic administrations.

The deep-seated oppression of women is rooted in the institution of the family, which arose with the advent of private property as a mechanism for passing property from one generation to the next—the monogamous wife ensures the paternity of the heirs. A major role of the family is to instill respect for authority and act as a conservatizing force. Together with religion, the family serves to instill a morality that proscribes anything that deviates from the ideal of one man on top of one woman for life.

The war on abortion rights, a battering ram for general social and political reaction, has gone along with a broader offensive against democratic rights and workers gains. With its hands on the wheels of production, the working class objectively has the social power to mobilize the struggle needed to defend its own interests and those of all the oppressed, including women. But given the high level of religiosity in this country, anti-abortion prejudices strongly influence much of the working class. With the dearth of social struggle today and its impact on political consciousness, it is even more difficult to win workers to the understanding that abortion must be defended not only as a "women's issue" but also an essential democratic right, the loss of which would redound against *all* working people.

We seek to forge a revolutionary party that will fight for all the oppressed layers in society and render the proletariat conscious of its role as gravedigger of the capitalist system. Such a party will be modeled on the Bolshevik Party of V. I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky, who led the October 1917 Revolution in Russia. Only through a victorious workers revolution can society be liberated from the profit system and private property and be reconstructed on socialist foundations. This will lay the basis for the full equality of women and the replacement of the family with socialized care of children and household duties. That is the meaning of our call: For women's liberation through socialist revolution! ■

BART...

(continued from page 12)

hetween Oakland and San Francisco. Bnt this operation went down with the severed bodies of the two scahs killed on the tracks. Their lies exposed, the BART hosses settled for an agreement that wasn't the total rout they were aiming for. While hardly a victory for the workers, they did not go back with their tails between their legs to he subjected to the untrammeled dictates of management. Nor do many workers think they will get much better under their current union misleaders. ***What is vital now is for union militants to draw the lessons from this strike to prepare for future battles.***

The Partnership of Capital and Labor Is a Lie!

Writing about the 1936 West Coast Maritime strike, American Trotskyist leader James P. Cannon observed:

> "A good deal is said about strike 'strategy'—and that has its uses within certain clearly defined limits—but when you get down to cases this strike, like every other strike, is simply a bullheaded struggle between two forces whose interests are in constant and irreconcilable conflict. The partnership of capital and labor is a lie. The immediate issue in every case is decided by the relative strength of the opposing forces at the moment. The only strike strategy worth a tinker's dam is the strategy that begins with this conception."
>
> —"The Maritime Strike,"
> 28 November 1936 from
> *Notebook of an Agitator* (1958)

No such conception guided the strategy of the BART union leaders. On the contrary, they peddle the myth of a "BART family," the workers and the bosses all in it together to make the system work. The class line is so foreign to the bureaucrats that they organized to mourn the death of the BART track engineer and contractor who were killed doing scab duty for management.

Pointing to the $100 million in cuts to wages, benefits and working conditions that they dealt away in 2009 to hail management out of a supposed budget shortfall, the BART union leaders this time argued that it was only fair for the workers to be rewarded for their sacrifice. But it doesn't work that way. This system is based on production for profit, and even though it is supposedly a "puhlic service" BART works on the same principle. Increasing their profits means driving down the cost of labor. Under capitalism, this is a constant and ongoing war, in "good times" as well as bad. The only thing that alters that calculus is class struggle, i.e., when workers withdraw their labor and cut off the flow of profits, mobilizing their allies behind them.

The BART bosses came into negotiations prepared for war. A notorious unionbuster, Thomas Hock of Veolia Transportation, was brought in at the price of some $400,000 to head the negotiations. Hock and Veolia have a vicious anti-union record stretching from Los Angeles, Las Vegas and Arizona to Boston and further across the globe. As an ATU leader in Arizona—where bus drivers waged a six-day strike against Veolia in Tempe and Phoenix—put it: "If Hock can bust a union, he will." But instead of preparing the ranks for battle, as the clock ran down on the contract expiration at the end of June, the leaders of ATU Local 1555 went looking for allies in the camp of the capitalist class enemy, appealing to California's Democratic Party governor Jerry Brown to impose a 60-day "cooling off" period.

Four days into the first strike at the beginning of July, Brown pressed the union tops to call off the strike. They happily obliged, ordering their members back to work. Returning to the negotiating table, SEIU leader Roxanne Sanchez warned that if management didn't agree to a deal "we will be prepared for the bloodiest, longest strike since the 1970s."

The massive labor battles in the Bay Area at that time are indeed instructive in demonstrating both the power of labor and the treachery of the trade-union bureaucrats. In San Francisco in 1974, a strike that began with SEIU city workers spread to hospitals and closed the city sewage treatment plant. At the height of these strike actions, workers in San Francisco's MUNI system, AC Transit and BART shut down all public transit within and to the city. Two years later in 1976, MUNI workers again halted the buses for over a month in solidarity with a strike by city craft workers. The determination and militancy of the workers from the city unions and MUNI to longshore was such that the Central Labor Council voted to prepare for a general strike.

But the union bureaucrats folded under pressure from the SF Democratic Party administration of "progressive" mayor George Moscone, preferring defeat to unleashing the unions in an all-out battle against the city's rulers. They were "rewarded" when Moscone unleashed a harrage of anti-union propositions. Today, Democratic Party politicians who were heavily bankrolled by the unions are leading the charge for legislation outlawing transit strikes. Here again is the bitter fruit of the bureaucrats' prostration before the Democrats, promoting a party that no less than the Republicans represents the bosses' interests.

On the other side of the coin, the 1974-76 strikes showed the power of labor that lies in its solidarity, collective organization and above all the ability to shut down production, transportation and other operations. For all Sanchez's bluster, such a fighting unity of the workers was not to be seen during the BART strike. Far from it. Throughout the strike, the ATU and SEIU maintained separate picket lines rather than mobilizing their forces together in mass pickets to hit the bosses where it would hurt.

They had ready allies in the 1,500 overwhelmingly black East Bay bus drivers and mechanics at AC Transit, who have twice now overwhelmingly voted down sellout deals made by their union leadership. Had BART workers picketed AC Transit bus barns, this could have brought these workers out, shutting down another key lifeline in the Bay Area's integrated transit system. That would have meant defying the bosses' laws. There would be no unions at all in this country if workers hadn't waged pitched battles against the bosses and their government, cops and courts. In contrast to this history, in the midst of the BART strike the AC Transit union tops in ATU Local 192 readily bowed before the imposition of a 60-day cooling off period. The AC Transit workers now face going it alone.

As we wrote after the BART union leaders called off the July strike: "The unions are elementary defense organizations of the working class against unbridled exploitation. The purpose of union leadership should be to lead their ranks in struggle. Instead, the union bureaucrats act like labor-management consultants keeping labor 'peace' while begging for a few crumbs" ("Union Tops Call Off BART Strike," *WV* No. 1027,

Stop Prosecution of ATU Militant!

The following letter was sent by the Partisan Defense Committee on October 28 to the Alameda County District Attorney.

The Partisan Defense Committee strongly protests the criminal charge filed hy the District Attorney's office against ATU 1555 union member George Figueroa, BART employee.

While working in Oakland as a BART station agent on June 8, Figueroa was physically accosted by an angry patron. As required by BART policy Figueroa, who sustained injury, filed an incident report for management, and also filed a report with BART police.

In the service of BART management's public position that the unions' concerns over safety problems at BART were a "fake issue" during contract negotiations, management sought criminal misdemeanor charges against Figueroa for allegedly making a "false report of a crime to a police officer."

While assisting in preparing union picket line teams on the eve of the July 1 strike, Brother Figueroa was targeted by management because he is an outspoken union activist.

This bogus charge against him is all part of the attempt by BART management to intimidate transit union members during their recent labor strikes.

We demand: Drop the charge against George Figueroa now!

Baltimore...

(continued from page 3)

them. When workplace disputes break out into open struggle between workers and the bosses, which side prevails is determined by their relative strength. Contracts merely constitute truces in the class war, and the main weapon that workers have is strike action. Wielding labor's power in defiance of anti-labor laws and injunctions is what built the unions in this country.

Such a perspective is anathema to the lahor bureaucrats, who subordinate the unions to the profitability of American capitalism and the political fortunes of the Democratic Party. Twice in the last year, the ILA tops scuttled the possihility of parallel strike action with the ILWU, leaving the West Coast longshore union to fend for itself. The first time was a gift to Obama in the run-up to last year's elections. With the old master contract set to expire the same day as the ILWU master grain agreement, ILA head Harold Daggett extended it in September 2012 "for the good of our Country and Our President."

At the same time that Daggett talked tough when it came to the master contract, the ILA tops were preparing to give ground on speedup and safety in the local contracts. The bosses first went after the union where it is strongest, in the Port of New York and New Jersey. An "anti-corruption" campaign by the Waterfront Commission of New York Harbor was rolled out against "no-show jobs" and union shop stewards said to be compensated for every hour of the day. In April, the New York Shipping Association succeeded in pushing through an agreement that introduced smaller gang sizes and unprecedented productivity commitments by the union tops.

In Norfolk, Virginia, the local contract was voted down twice before Daggett and USMX chief Dave Adam showed up to ram the deal down the throats of the union membership. The ILA locals still negotiating contracts, including Charleston and Philadelphia, had the rug pulled out from under them when the ILA International signed the master contract with its no-strike clause in August. Their position is further weakened by the acquiescence to the arbitrator's ruling in Baltimore.

It is a boon to the bosses that pay rates for handling much of the cargo not shipped in containers, as well as gang sizes and other work rules for all cargo, are negotiated locally rather than in the master contract. In the spirit of drumming up more business for the employers at their home ports, ILA local leaders have long engaged in fierce competition that pits workers at different ports against each other jockeying for jobs. In 1999, the ILA granted a charter to Local 2066 in Baltimore, a group of longshoremen seeking to draw steel cargo lost to other ports back up the Chesapeake Bay by promising to work for less than Local 333. Such rivalry is poison to the unity and integrity of the ILA and has helped fuel the growth of non-union outfits. Its corollary on the global playing field is the ILA tops' patriotic salute to American capitalism, which can only undermine international workers solidarity.

When the widening of the Panama Canal is completed, similar competition with ports worked by the ILWU may well sharpen. The ILWU's recent exit from the AFL-CIO leaves the dock unions on both coasts more vulnerable to attempts to divide and conquer. Like the ILWU, the ILA is an increasingly isolated union outpost on the waterfront. The continued existence of the two as powerful industrial unions demands hard class struggle to organize the vast numbers of unorganized workers along the cargo chain, such as the heavily immigrant port truckers and warehouse workers.

In undertaking this fight, the unions will have to become champions of immigrant and black rights. This potential is shown in many port cities in the South, where ILA locals are an anchor for the black population and can provide a springboard for organizing across the region. Out of such battles to revitalize labor, a new leadership of the unions must emerge that strives not only to repel the attacks of the capitalist exploiters but to forge the workers party needed to end their rule once and for all. ■

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12 July). Why? Because the purpose of trade-union officials, so aptly described by early American socialist leader Daniel De Leon as the "labor lieutenants of capital," is to ensure the subordination of the workers' interests to the interests of their exploiters. Indeed, even the notion that there is a working class in this country has been deep-sixed by the bureaucrats, who present the unions as defending the "middle class."

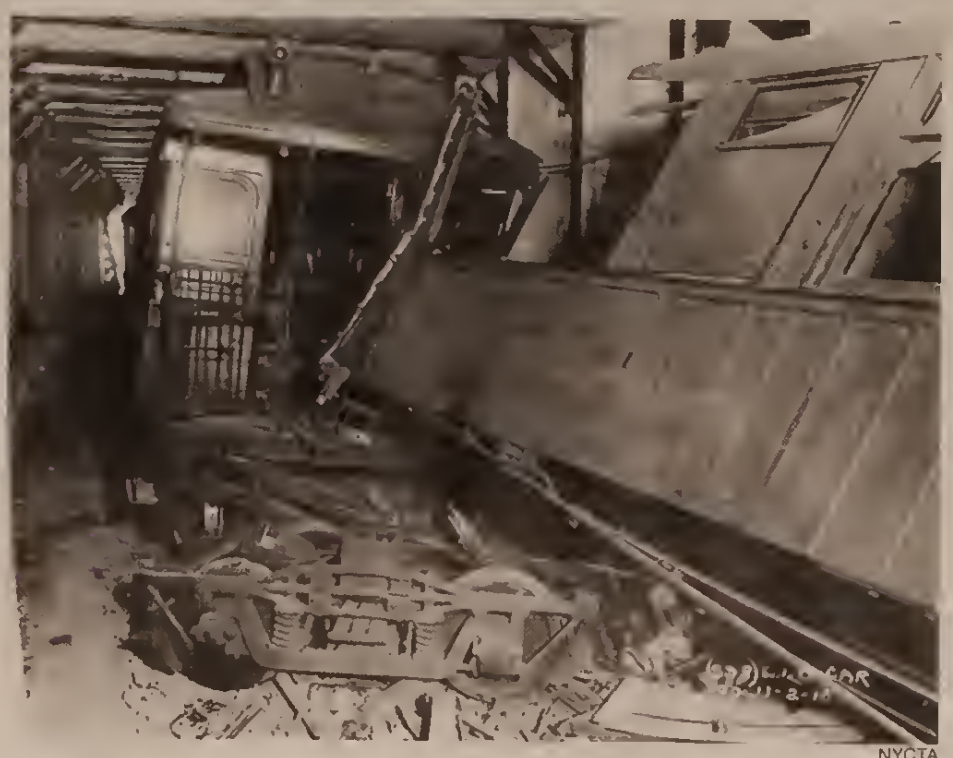
The beginning of wisdom for those looking for a road forward for the working class is the understanding, as Cannon put it, that the "partnership of capital and labor is a lie." If labor is to win some battles for a change, it must fight them out class against class, independent from and in opposition to the bosses, the government and all of the political parties of the class enemy.

The Road of the Class Struggle

During the BART strike, there certainly was no lack of raw class hatred whipped up by the bourgeois media. Alongside the well-heeled professionals employed in San Francisco's financial district, the filthy rich high-tech moguls in Silicon Valley let loose with a union-hating barrage and barely concealed racist contempt for the highly integrated BART unions. One of these self-perceived "masters of the universe" declared: "Get 'em back to work, pay them whatever they want, and then figure out how to automate their jobs so this doesn't happen again." Given the outcome of BART management's efforts to get an automated scab system going, we can only recommend the bosses of cyberspace be the first to take a ride on a totally automated BART train.

The BART bosses are a danger not just to the safety of the workers but also to the lives of the 400,000 people who ride these trains daily. To get something of an idea, consider the mangled bodies of the more than 90 people who were killed when a train being run by an untrained scab motorman ran off the tracks during a 1918 transit strike in New York City. In the decades since, the city's transit bosses have never again tried to run such a scab operation.

Operating the BART trains is highly complex and requires a great deal of skill. There are no train conductors, so the drivers are on their own. For decades, under a BART company policy called "simple approval," track workers have been made to do repairs while trains continued to run at full speed without being told when a train was approaching. The declared purpose was to force the workers to remain vigilant! Five years ago, BART worker James Strickland was killed on the tracks when struck from behind by a train that had been single-tracked without his knowing. According to an SEIU 1021 statement, over the past ten years BART management has authorized spending "more than $300,000 to fight state safety regulators." Now under investigation by the National Transportation Safety Board, the BART bosses have announced that they are temporarily shelving "simple approval."



NYCTA

Train wreckage in Brooklyn subway tunnel at Malbone Street. At least 93 people were killed by scab driver during 1918 motormen strike.

When the lives of the BART track engineer and contractor were cut down, the unions were well-positioned to win allies from the riding public in the fight for safety and to put paid to the bosses' campaign against them as "greedy" workers hilking the public purse. Instead, ATU Local 1555 pulled down its picket lines, and both unions held vigils mourning the deaths of people who at management's behest had crossed their picket lines. As a retired longshoreman commented when she went to the picket lines to support the strike, there was no such vigil by the unions for Oscar Grant, the 22-year-old black father who was executed by BART police on New Year's Day 2009. On the contrary, the BART cops—whose job policing the trains is not only to target black and other minority youth but also to act as the private strikebreaking force for the bosses—are welcomed as "union brothers." A deadly danger to the unions, such an embrace of these cops can only alienate black and immigrant working people and the poor from seeing any stake in the unions' fight.

At one time, the gains made by the unions in their struggles were seen as setting a standard for wages and living conditions for other workers. Now, as one Bay Area union official commented during the BART strike, "The situation definitely raises issues of how unions are being perceived by the public. To many we are just another special-interest group" (*SF Chronicle*, 19 October). This stage was set in 1981 when Republican president Ronald Reagan crushed the PATCO air traffic controllers union (which had given him electoral support), ushering in a war against the unions under the battle cry of protecting the public against overpaid workers living high on the hog at others' expense. The aim was to further the most vicious exploitation of the workers who were to be "happy" to get any job at any wage, while slashing social programs for the growing masses of unemployed, particularly the ghetto poor.

The trade-union misleaders who have all but turned their backs on the unorganized workers, the poor, the jobless, black people and immigrants are themselves culpable in making the unions appear as little more than bastions of privilege that are only out for themselves. Moreover, in doing so little to fight even in their own defense, the unions are far from providing inspiration for others to struggle.

If the unions are to wage the battles necessary for their own defense and the defense of all the oppressed, there must be a political struggle to get rid of the sellouts sitting on top of the unions who strangle the workers' fighting spirit. What is needed is a leadership that will arm the workers with the understanding of both their social power and their historic interests to free all of humanity from the exploitation and all-sided misery inherent to a system based on production for profit. Such a leadership will be forged in the crucible of future class battles and will be integral to the fight to build a revolutionary workers party whose aim is no less than to do away with the entire system of capitalist wage slavery through socialist revolution.

As Cannon wrote in "Who Can Save the Unions?", which was reprinted in our last issue and sold to BART workers on the picket lines:

> "Let the labor unions put aside their illusions; let them face the issue squarely and fight it out on the basis of the class struggle. Instead of seeking peace when there is no peace, and 'understanding' with those who do not want to understand, let them declare war on the whole capitalist regime. That is the only way to save the unions and to make them grow in the face of adversity and become powerful war engines for the destruction of capitalism and reorganization of society on the foundation of working class control in industry and government."■

Immigration...

(continued from page 1)

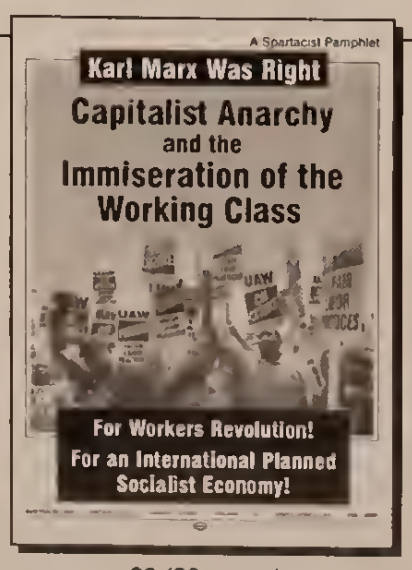
annually. The heavily immigrant Service Employees International Union, the mainstay of the Change to Win federation, similarly calls for regulating work visas in line with "the needs of our economy."

A large number of new visas will be for technical professions, as Silicon Valley and engineering firms clamor for skilled personnel they cannot recruit domestically due largely to the woeful state of U.S. science and math education. But a number will go for hotel, restaurant, farm and other manual labor. From the meatpacking plants and warehouses to the service industries, organizing foreign-born workers will be a crucial part of reviving the unions after decades of the capitalists' one-sided war against labor. But in the view of the hidebound labor bureaucracy, these same workers mainly represent a threat to remaining union jobs. So in hammering out the visa deal, AFL-CIO bargainers insisted that in the construction industry it would apply only to unskilled workers—a nod to racist job-trusting in the skilled trades unions.

At the AFL-CIO convention in Los Angeles in September, Maria Elena Durazo, chair of the federation's Committee on Immigration Reform, defended the leadership's support to S.744 by pointing to a provision that allows guest workers, who up to now have been bound to a single employer, to change jobs. This is scant solace for those like the Jamaican cleaners who would still be offered the lowest possible wages and face the ever-present threat of deportation. The AFL-CIO chiefs have a critical word or two for the bill's reinforcing of the E-Verify employment database check, a cornerstone of Obama's anti-immigrant crackdown that doubles as another weapon for the bosses to break union organizing drives. But far from opposing E-Verify, the labor statesmen simply offered tweaks to the procedure, trying to perfect a measure designed to drive those without papers out of the workforce.

Immigrants have been and will be in the front lines of labor's fight against its exploiters. A century ago, Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin noted in "Capitalism and Workers' Immigration" (October 1913) that "capitalism is drawing the masses of the working people of the *whole* world, breaking down the musty, fusty habits of local life, breaking down national barriers and prejudices, uniting workers from all countries in huge factories and mines in America, Germany, and so forth." Indeed, from the late 19th to the early 20th centuries, immigrants to the U.S. included many militants from Europe who helped forge early labor and socialist organizations, running head-on into open chauvinists like AFL head Samuel Gompers. Immigrant radicals were also instrumental in the founding of the Communist movement in the U.S. and elsewhere. In more recent decades, those from Latin America brought into the U.S. proletariat their experiences of convulsive social and class struggles against murderous U.S.-backed capitalist regimes.

Like doubly oppressed black workers, immigrants will play a leading role in forging a revolutionary proletarian party that will lead the exploited and oppressed masses in sweeping away the decaying capitalist order through socialist revolution. As the Bolsheviks in power did, and as the Paris Communards of 1871 did before them, an American workers government would grant full citizenship rights to all who labor, whatever their origin. Through a series of workers revolutions internationally, a world planned economy will be established, laying the basis for finally overcoming material scarcity and, with that, the last remnants of national borders and class divisions.■



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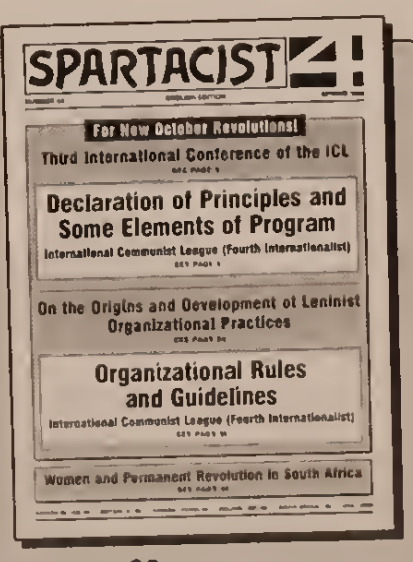

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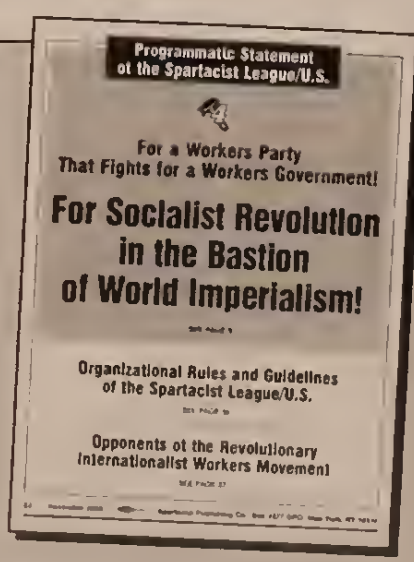

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WORKERS VANGUARD

As Legal Attacks Mount

Film Honors Heroic Abortion Providers

Oscilloscope Laboratories

Hernandez/Wichita Eagle

As seen in *After Tiller*, Dr. Susan Robinson in her Albuquerque, New Mexico, abortion clinic. Inset: Dr. George Tiller outside his Wichita, Kansas, clinic in 1992. On 31 May 2009, an anti-abortion vigilante gunned down Dr. Tiller.

"We've been at war since *Roe v. Wade* was passed, except there's only been one side that's been fighting this war." That defiant statement was made by Dr. LeRoy Carhart in the recently released documentary film *After Tiller*. A former lieutenant colonel in the Air Force, Dr. Carhart is one of only four doctors left in this country who openly provide late-term (third-trimester) abortions. *After Tiller*, by filmmakers Martha Shane and Lana Wilson, introduces us as well to Drs. Warren Hern, Susan Robinson and Shelley Sella. They all knew and worked with pre-eminent abortion pruvider Dr. George Tiller, who was assassinated in his church on a Sunday morning in 2009. The film portrays the doctors' compassion for their patients and steely determination to stand up to the anti-abortion bigots who hound them and threaten their lives.

Most abortions take place in the first trimester when the procedure is relatively simple and can often be achieved with medication alone. Less than 1 percent of abortions in the U.S. take place in the third trimester, when the procedure is much more complicated. But this is not the reason why so few doctors are trained or willing to perform this procedure. Third-trimester abortion is prohibited in all but nine states, and late-term abortion providers have been vilified, terrorized and murdered. Dr. Tiller faced massive legal and extralegal harassment for over 35 years for the abortion services he provided women, including late in pregnancy.

Dr. Tiller was the eighth person killed in murderous attacks on abortion providers since the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court ruling struck down anti-abortion laws. *After Tiller* makes it abundantly evident that Tiller's four colleagues, who have likewise faced years of harassment and threats, are well aware that they, too, could be picked off at any moment. Carhart and his wife recall the arson attack on their property that was carried out in the early 1990s, not long after Carhart had started performing abortions in Bellevue, Nebraska. His daughter was hounded out of her home, and for years Carhart fought anti-abortionists seeking the eviction of his general surgery practice.

The *Roe v. Wade* ruling represented a precious gain for women's political and social rights, but from the beginning it was limited and partial. *After Tiller* underlines the fact that the 1973 Supreme Court ruling specifically granted states the right to outlaw abortions in the third trimester of pregnancy—"after viability," in the words of the court. The majority decision written by Judge Harry Blackmun upheld the states' right to interfere in the personal decisions of women, stating that some "argue that the woman's right is absolute and that she is entitled

continued on page 9

Bosses Kill Own Scabs

BART Strike Ends with Blood on Tracks

The second Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) strike in the last four months ended late October 21 with the leaders of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 1021 and Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 1555 announcing that they had a deal with management. Their 2,400 members were told to take down their picket lines and return to work without even knowing the terms of the agreement, much less getting to vote on it. For her part, BART general manager Grace Crunican announced that "this offer is more than we wanted to pay." Indeed, the aim of the BART hosses was to force the unions into total submission to their "last, best, final offer," if not to bust them entirely.

They didn't succeed. But no credit is due to the misleaders of the BART unions, who went far more than half way down the road to meet management's demands for concessions. The very first day of the four-day strike, a joint statement by the ATU and SEIU tops offered to get the trains back up and running, noting their "100 percent" agreement with the bosses' demands that union members start shelling out pension contributions from their wages and up their health care payments more than a third. They further offered to submit management's demands for unilateral authority over crucial workplace rules on scheduling, discipline and other issues to binding arbitration, i.e., to the agents of the capitalist state. The BART bosses weren't budging. They wanted the unions tu crawl back under management's terms. But in the end they were foiled by their own vicious arrogance and literally deadly stupidity.

WV Photo

October 18: Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1555 picket line at El Cerrito del Norte BART station.

It all blew up in the early afternoon of the second day of the strike when two of management's own scabs working on the tracks were run over and killed by a BART train operated by scab trainees. It was practice for operating a skeletal strikebreaking service. Initially, the transit bosses simply lied through their teeth. Denying that this was a practice run, they said the train was simply heing moved to another yard to have graffiti cleaned off and that it was being run automatically, nut for training. These lies were exposed by an investigator from the National Transportation Safety Board who reported that the train was carrying six BART employees "for training and maintenance purposes." Two of them shared time in the driver's seat, backed by an "experienced trainer," while the train was heing run automatically, traveling at 60 to 70 miles per hour.

Before the strike, it was widely acknowledged that the BART hosses had plans to set up such a strikebreaking uperation

continued on page 10

WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 1034

15 November 2013

U.S. Imperialists Squirm over Exposures

Spying and Lying in the Belly of the Beast

NSA

ZUMA Press

Left: NSA headquarters in Fort Meade, Maryland. Right: Thousands protest against NSA spying at National Mall in Washington, D.C., October 26.

The highly secretive National Security Agency (NSA) has found details of its snooping activities splashed across the front pages of newspapers the world over ever since its former analyst Edward Snowden made off with a cache of documents earlier this year. Recent disclosures over U.S. surveillance of foreign heads of state have now put the White House in an awkward spot. For its part, the NSA baldly presents itself as the very guardian of democracy. In the words of the agency's own (classified) five-year plan, its electronic eavesdroppers "hold the moral high ground, even as terrorists or dictators seek to exploit our freedoms." In reality, the billions of electronic intercepts the NSA has amassed are simply the covert face of U.S. imperialism's drive to dominate the world. In the seventy years that the U.S. has been the top imperialist power, millions have been slaughtered in wars to enforce its domination.

Snowden, and before him Chelsea Manning and Julian Assange, deserve full credit for revelations that at great personal cost have chipped away at the imperialists' facade of piety. The spying scandal has brought additional discomfort to an administration that lost face when it had to back down from an attack on Syria and then found its credibility further damaged when it bungled the implementation of its signature health care law. The White House is attempting to cover up its responsibility for the "excesses" of the American snoops with an outpouring of lies, obfuscations and two-faced apologies. President Obama has surpassed his predecessor when it comes to invading privacy, shredding basic democratic rights and enhancing covert police powers. Meanwhile, Congressmen who voted to pour oceans of money into the NSA (its 2013 budget request was $10.8 billion) have feigned surprise over the extent of spying.

An article by Henry Farrell and Martha Finnemore in the November/December issue of *Foreign Affairs* makes the obvious point that nothing has been revealed thus far about NSA spying that was really unexpected. The authors observe, "The deeper threat that leakers such as Manning and Snowden pose is more subtle than a direct assault on U.S. national security: they undermine Washington's ability to act hypocritically and get away with it." Hypocrisy is a necessary component of the democratic form of capitalist class rule. It is a sugar coating that masks the bitter taste of the exploitation and oppression inherent to capitalist society.

While attempting to lull the masses with hypocrisy, the bosses also employ the cops, the courts, the military and the prisons as the fundamental guardians of their rule. The NSA's massive accumulation of data facilitates the depredations of U.S. imperialism abroad as well as state control over the American population, including the repression of those who defy the dictates of the capitalist rulers. Never far from the minds of the exploiters is the working class, the only force with the cohesion and social power to overthrow capitalist rule.

The "war on terror" is a convenient fiction, a political crusade that has provided the U.S. bourgeoisie with a pretext for enhancing its repressive arsenal. This apparatus of state terror will be brought to bear in any future upsurge in workers struggle, when the capitalists' war against labor militancy again flares up. In the 1886 Haymarket massacre, Chicago police attacked workers rallying for the eight-hour day and arrested eight anarchist labor organizers who were subsequently framed up and imprisoned or executed. After World War I, thousands of foreign-born radicals were deported in an attempt to quash the labor militancy that had been ignited in the U.S. by the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. After World War II, the McCarthy witchhunts purged the reds who built the CIO industrial union federation from the labor movement.

U.S. Spying and the European Bourgeoisies

For their truth telling, Snowden, Manning and Assange have all become targets of the American capitalist rulers. Chelsea Manning, then known as Bradley, was charged under the 1917 Espionage Act, convicted and sentenced in August to 35 years in prison for the "crime" of exposing U.S. imperialism's atrocities in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere. Assange, trapped in the Ecuadorean Embassy in London, is the target of a CIA manhunt for publishing Manning's revelations on WikiLeaks. Snowden depends precariously on a one-year residency permit granted by Russian president Vladimir Putin, who nonetheless described the NSA's mass surveillance programs as "the way a civilized society should go about fighting terrorism." Some German politicians have now mooted offering Snowden political asylum in exchange for his testimony about U.S. spying.

Capitalist rulers like German chancellor Angela Merkel and Brazilian president Dilma Rousseff are no doubt dismayed that the wheelings and dealings conducted on their cell phones have become the property of the NSA. Merkel, who is seen as the Torquemada of European Union (EU) austerity, and Rousseff, who faces increasing economic discontent at home, have opted to enhance their reputations by demagogically indicting the excesses of the American behemoth and posturing as champions of privacy rights that the U.S. government is trampling.

But the great power competitors of U.S. imperialism are themselves well practiced in turning the tools of espionage against their own populations. Soon after the French and German governments made a show of outrage over the NSA bugging their diplomatic offices, it was revealed that the two EU heavyweights were engaged in the same kind of domestic mass data collection as the NSA, sharing information with the Americans. Among the "Success Stories" trumpeted in one classified NSA document made available by Snowden is the German government modifying its interpretations of privacy laws "to afford the BND [intelligence service] more flexibility in sharing protected information with foreign partners."

Germany has long been miffed by its exclusion from the Five Eyes—the alliance of the U.S., Britain and the junior imperialist suckerfish of Canada, Australia and New Zealand, which supposedly allows these partners access to virtually all of each other's intelligence. Britain has, to date, been especially zealous in its defense of the U.S. super spies. Invoking anti-terror law, British authorities detained David Miranda, the partner of reporter Glenn Greenwald who published Snowden's initial revelations, at Heathrow

continued on page 11

1991-92 Capitalist Counterrevolution

Why the Soviet Workers Did Not Rise Up

In our last issue, we marked the anniversary of the 1917 October Revolution with the article "The Proletarian Revolution in Russia" (*WV* No. 1033, 1 November). Fighting against the revolution's degeneration under Stalinist misrule, Leon Trotsky insisted that defense of the Soviet workers state against its imperialist and domestic class enemies was an essential precondition to fighting for proletarian political revolution to oust the bureaucratic usurpers.

Based on this understanding, the International Communist League intervened into the crucial events touched off by Boris Yeltsin's U.S.-backed power grab in August 1991, with our comrades in Russia distributing over 100,000 copies of a leaflet titled "Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!" However, in the absence of mass working-class resistance, Yeltsin's forces eventually consolidated power. A historic defeat for the international proletariat, capitalist restoration meant social catastrophe for the Soviet working people, a fate that would surely befall the masses in China and the other remaining deformed workers states in the event of a victorious counterrevolution.

Accommodating the bourgeois "death of communism" lie, self-styled Marxists worldwide rushed to remove any taint of association with Bolshevism. In contrast, the ICL drew the lessons of the bitter defeat in the former Soviet Union in order to *go forward* in the struggle for new October Revolutions. Below we reprint excerpts from our article "How the Soviet Workers State Was Strangled," which appeared in *WV* No. 564 (27 November 1992) and later in a pamphlet of the same name.

* * *

Since rising to power over the backs of the Soviet working class through a political counterrevolution in 1923-24, the Stalinist bureaucracy imposed a suffocating isolation on the first workers state, suppressing one international revolutionary opportunity after another. In the name of building "socialism in one country," the Stalinists—through terror and lies—methodically attacked and eroded every aspect of the revolutionary and internationalist consciousness which had made the Soviet working class the vanguard detachment of the world proletariat.

The isolated workers state was subjected to the unremitting pressures of imperialism, not only military encirclement and an arms buildup aimed at bankrupting the Soviet economy, but also the pressure of the imperialist world market. As Trotsky wrote in *The Third International After Lenin:* "it is not so much military intervention as the intervention of cheaper capitalist commodities that constitutes perhaps the greatest immediate menace to Soviet economy." Although the planned economy proved its superiority over capitalist anarchy during its period of extensive growth, as the need for quality and intensive development came to the fore the bureaucratic stranglehold more and more undermined the economy. Finally, through his perestroika "market reforms" and acquiescence to capitalist restoration throughout East Europe, Gorbachev opened wide the floodgates to a direct counterrevolutionary onslaught by Yeltsin & Co.

The bourgeoisie and the Stalinists alike have long sought to identify Lenin's October with Stalin's conservative bureaucratic rule. But nationalist Stalinism is the antithesis of Leninist internationalism. The Soviet degenerated workers state (and the deformed workers states which later arose on the Stalinist model) was a historic anomaly, resulting from the isolation of economically backward Russia and the failure of proletarian revolution to spread to the advanced imperialist countries. Stalinism represented a roadblock to progress toward socialism. As Trotsky wrote in "Not a Workers' and Not a Bourgeois State?" (November 1937):

> "That which was a 'bureaucratic deformation' is at the present moment preparing to devour the workers' state, without leaving any remains, and on the ruins of nationalized property to spawn a new propertied class. Such a possibility has drawn extremely near."

While the Stalinist regime was able to prolong its existence as a result of the heroic victory of the Soviet masses over the Nazi invasion in World War II, Trotsky's Marxist analysis has ultimately, unfortunately, been vindicated in the negative.

Why did the Soviet working class not rally to defend its gains? How did the counterrevolution triumph and destroy the workers state without a civil war? In his seminal 1933 work laying out the perspective of proletarian political revolution, Trotsky polemicized against social democrats and proponents of various "new class" theories who claimed that under Stalin's rule, the Soviet Union had imperceptibly changed from a workers to a bourgeois state without any qualitative transformation of either the state apparatus or the property forms:

> "The Marxist thesis relating to the catastrophic character of the transfer of power from the hands of one class into the hands of another applies not only to revolutionary periods, when history sweeps madly ahead, but also to the periods of counterrevolution, when society rolls backwards. He who asserts that the Soviet government has been *gradually* changed from proletarian to bourgeois is only, so to speak, running backwards the film of reformism."
>
> —"The Class Nature of the Soviet State" (October 1933)

There was certainly nothing gradual or imperceptible about the social counterrevolution in the ex-USSR, which has been extremely violent and convulsive throughout the former Soviet bloc. However,

Pamphlet contains material on unfolding counterrevolution in USSR and ICL's fight against it. Available for $2 from Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116.

Trotsky also advanced the *pragnosis* that a civil war would be required to restore capitalism in the Soviet Union and undo the deepgoing proletarian revolution.

In a wide-ranging discussion in the ICL two years ago on the counterrevolutionary overturns in East Europe and the DDR (East Germany), it was noted that Trotsky had overdrawn the analogy between a social revolution in capitalist society and social counterrevolution in a deformed workers state (see Joseph Seymour, "On the Collapse of Stalinist Rule in East Europe," and Albert St. John, "For Marxist Clarity and a Forward Perspective," *Spartacist* No. 45-46, Winter 1990-91). Where the capitalists exercise direct ownership over the means of production, and thus are compelled to violently resist the overthrow of their system in order to defend their own property, the preservation of proletarian power depends principally on *consciousness* and *orgonization* of the working class.

Trotsky himself emphasized this point in his 1928 article "What Now?":

> "The socialist character of our state industry...is determined and secured in a decisive measure by the role of the party, the voluntary internal cohesion of the proletarian vanguard, the conscious discipline of the administrators, trade union functionaries, members of the shop nuclei, etc."
>
> —*The Third International After Lenin*

And again, in "The Workers' State, Thermidor and Bonapartism" (February 1935), he stated: "*In contradistinction to capitalism, socialism is built not automatically but consciously.*"

When Trotsky wrote these articles, the memory of the October Revolution was still a part of the direct personal experience of the overwhelming mass of the Soviet proletariat, albeit already considerably warped by Stalinist falsification and revision. In the intervening decades, the nationalist bureaucracy did much to extirpate any real understanding of what came to be iconized as the "Great October Socialist Revolution." In Soviet mass consciousness, World War II, dubbed by the Stalinists the "Great Patriotic War" and suffused with the Russian-nationalist propaganda Stalin churned out during the war, came to supplant the October Revolution as the epochal event in Soviet history. In the end, Stalin and his heirs succeeded in imprinting their nationalist outlook on the Soviet peoples; proletarian internationalism came to be sneered at as an obscure "Trotskyite heresy" of "export of revolution" or, at best, emptied of any content while paid cynical lip service.

With Gorbachev's "new thinking"—i.e., his cringing capitulation to each and every imperialist ultimatum—even lip service to the ideals of the Bolshevik Revolution went by the boards. The Soviet soldiers who had been told, and believed, that they were fulfilling their "internationalist duty" in fighting against the reactionary Afghan mujahedin on the USSR's border, were then maligned for perpetrating "Russia's Vietnam" against Afghanistan. Gorbachev's ignominious pullout from Afghanistan and his green light to the imperialist annexation of the DDR served only to further a sense of defeatism and demoralization among the Soviet masses, while the so-called Stalinist "patriots" who denounced Gorbachev's concessions did so only to beat the drums for Great Russian imperial ambitions, explicitly harking back to the time of the tsars.

Even so, the spontaneous strikes which erupted in the Soviet coal fields in the summer of 1989 against the ravages of Gorbachev's "market socialism" dramatically demonstrated the potential for militant working-class struggle. As Russian social democrat Boris Kagarlitsky documents in his book *Farewell Perestroika* (1990), the strike committees in many areas became "the actual centre of popular power," organizing food distribution, maintaining order, etc. As we pointed out at the time, the Kuzbass strikes "have quickly generated organizational forms of proletarian power, including strike committees and workers militias" ("Soviet Workers Flex Their Muscle," *WV* No. 482, 21 July 1989).

These developments pointed to the possibility of authentic soviets, which—by drawing in collective farmers, women, pensioners, soldiers and officers—could have served as the basis for a new proletarian political power, ousting the bureaucracy through a political revolution. But when the Gorbachev regime reneged on its promises to the miners, pro-imperialist agitators trained by the "AFL-CIA" moved into the vacuum of leadership and set up the Independent Miners Union, organizing an activist minority of the miners as a battering ram for Yeltsin.

However, a majority of the miners as well as the rest of the Soviet working class remained passive in the three-sided contest between the Yeltsin-led "democrats," Gorbachev and the more conservative wing of the Stalinists. The mass of workers were wary, if not outright hostile, to the pro-Western advocates of a "market

continued on page 7

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.

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The closing date for news in this issue is November 12.

No. 1034 **15 November 2013**

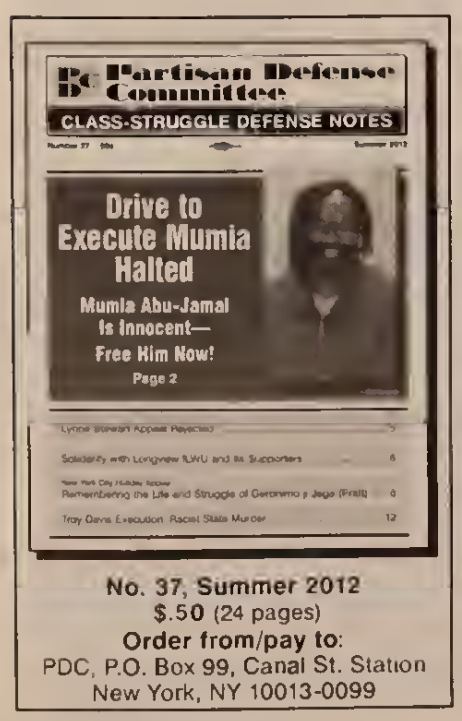
Free the Class-War Prisoners!

This year marks the 28th anniversary of the Partisan Defense Committee's program of sending stipends to class-war prisoners, those behind bars for the "crime" of standing up to the varied expressions of racist capitalist oppression. The PDC's Holiday Appeal raises funds to send monthly stipends to 21 class-war prisoners and also provides holiday gifts for the prisoners and their families. We do this not just because it's the right thing to do. The monthly stipends, just increased from $25 to $50, and holiday gifts are not charity. They are vital acts of class solidarity to remind the prisoners that they are not forgotten.

The Holiday Appeals are a stark contrast to the hypocritical appeals of bourgeois charities. Whether it comes from the megachurches of Southern televangelists or the urbane editors of the *New York Times*, the invocation of "peace on earth and goodwill toward men" at this time of year is nothing more than a public relations scam to obscure the grinding exploitation of workers and the beggar-the-poor policies that are the hallmark of both major parties of American capitalism. The lump of coal in the Christmas stocking for millions of impoverished families this year is a drastic cut in their already starvation food stamp rations. Christmas turkey for many is likely to be sculpted from cans of Spam.

The prisoners generally use the funds for basic necessities, from supplementing the inadequate prison diet to buying stamps and writing materials, or to pursue literary, artistic and musical endeavors that help ameliorate the living hell of prison life. As Tom Manning of the Ohio 7 wrote to the PDC four years ago: "Just so you know, it [the stipend] goes for bags of mackerel and jars of peanut butter, to supplement my protein needs." In a separate letter, his comrade Jaan Laaman observed: "This solidarity and support is important and necessary for us political prisoners, especially as the years and decades of our captivity grind on.... Being in captivity is certainly harsh, and this includes the sufferings of our children and families and friends. But prison walls and sentences do not and can not stop struggle."

We look to the work of the International Labor Defense (ILD) under its first secretary, James P. Cannon (1925-28), who went on to become the founder of American Trotskyism. As the ILD did, we stand unconditionally on the side of the working people and their allies in struggle against their exploiters and oppressors. We defend, in Cannon's words, "any member of the workers movement, regardless of his views, who suffered persecution by the capitalist courts because of his activities or his opinion" (*First Ten Years of American Communism*, 1962).



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28th Annual PDC Holiday Appeal

Initiated in 1986, the PDC stipend program revived an early tradition of the ILD. The mid 1980s were a time of waning class and social struggle but also a time when the convulsive struggles for black rights more than a decade earlier still haunted America's capitalist rulers, who thirsted for vengeance. Among the early recipients of PDC stipends were members and supporters of the Black Panther Party (BPP), the best of a generation of black radicals who sought a revolutionary solution to black oppression—a bedrock of American capitalism.

Foremost among these was Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt), former leader of the BPP in Los Angeles. Geronimo won his release in 1997 after spending 27 years behind bars for a murder the cops and FBI knew he did not commit. FBI wiretap logs, disappeared by the Feds, showed that Geronimo was 400 miles away in San Francisco at the time of the Santa Monica killing. Other victims of the government's deadly Counterintelligence Program (COINTELPRO) remain entombed decades later. Absent an upsurge of class and social struggle that transforms the political landscape, they will likely breathe their last breaths behind bars.

Among the dozens of past stipend recipients are Eddie McClelland, a supporter of the Irish Republican Socialist Party who was framed on charges related to the killing of three members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary in Northern Ireland, and Mordechai Vanunu, who helped expose the Israeli nuclear arsenal. At its outset, our program included five British miners imprisoned during the bitter 1984-85 coal strike. State repression of labor struggle in the U.S. added to our program, for a time, other militants railroaded to prison for defending their union against scabs in the course of strike battles: Jerry Dale Lowe of the United Mine Workers in West Virginia. Amador Betancourt of Teamsters Local 912 in California and Bob Buck of Steelworkers Local 5668 in West Virginia. (For more background on the PDC and the stipend program, see "18th Annual Holiday Appeal for Class-War Prisoners," *WV* No. 814, 21 November 2003.)

The most recent additions to the stipend program include Lynne Stewart and the Tinley Park 5. Stewart is an attorney who spent four decades fighting to keep black and radical activists out of the clutches of the state, only to find herself joining them behind bars on ludicrous "support to terrorism" charges. The youthful anti-fascist fighters known as the Tinley Park 5 were thrown in prison for heroically dispersing a meeting of fascists in May 2012.

Bettmann

PDC is modeled on early Communist Party's International Labor Defense. ILD launched mass campaign to save victimized anarchist militants Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, both executed in 1927.

At the time of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, we warned that the enhanced police powers being amassed to go after immigrants from Muslim countries would also be used against the oppressed black population and the working class as a whole. That the "war on terror" takes aim at leftist opponents of this or that government policy is affirmed by the massive "anti-terror" police mobilizations and arrests that have accompanied protest outside every Democratic and Republican national convention, among other gatherings, in recent years. Other recent examples include the FBI-coordinated nationwide crackdown on "Occupy" movement encampments and the state of siege in Chicago during the 2012 NATO summit.

The witchhunt against the Tinley Park 5 coincided with and fed into the hysteria whipped up against the anti-NATO protesters, particularly anarchists and participants in Black Bloc actions. Sitting in jail awaiting trial for 18 months are three protesters set up by a police provocateur. They were arrested and charged under Illinois anti-terrorism statutes, the first time these laws were ever used. Free the anti-NATO protesters! Drop the charges!

Continuing the Legacy of Class-Struggle Defense

The PDC is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization that champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the Marxist political views of the Spartacist League, which initiated the PDC in 1974. The PDC's first major defense effort was the case of Mario Muñoz, the Chilean miners' leader threatened with death in 1976 by the Argentine military junta. An international campaign of protests by unions and civil libertarians, cosponsored by the Committee to Defend Worker and Sailor Prisoners in Chile, won asylum in France for Muñoz and his family. The PDC has also initiated labor/black mobilizations against provocations by the Ku Klux Klan and Nazis from San Francisco to Atlanta to New York to Springfield, Illinois, and mobilized sections of the integrated labor movement to join these efforts.

Cannon's ILD, which was affiliated to the early Communist Party, was our model for class-struggle defense. It fused the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) tradition of militant class-struggle, non-sectarian defense and their slogan, "An injury to one is an injury to all," with the internationalism of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, a revolution made not merely for the workers of Russia but for the workers and oppressed of the world. These principles were embodied in the International Organization for Aid to Fighters of the Revolution (MOPR), a defense organization formed in the Soviet Union

continued on page 4

28th Annual PDC Holiday Appeal

Free the Class-War Prisoners!
Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!
Free Lynne Stewart!

CHICAGO

Sunday, December 15
3 to 7 p.m.
U.E. Hall
37 S. Ashland (at Monroe)
Information: (312) 563-0442

NEW YORK CITY

Sunday, December 15
4 to 8 p.m.
The Commons Brooklyn
388 Atlantic Ave., Brooklyn
(B, Q, 2, 3, 4 or 5 Train to Atlantic Ave.-Barclays. A, C or G Train to Hoyt-Schermerhorn)
Information: (212) 406-4252

TORONTO

Saturday, December 14
7 to 10 p.m.
Betty's
240 King St. East, upstairs
(East of Sherbourne St.)
Information: (416) 593-4138

Illustration by Deni

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Class-War Prisoners...

(continued from page 3)

in 1922 that was more popularly known as the International Red Aid.

The ILD was born out of discussions in 1925 between Cannon and Big Bill Haywood, who had been a leader of the Western Federation of Miners and then the IWW. The venue was Moscow, where Haywood had fled in 1921 after jumping bond while awaiting appeal of his conviction for having called a strike during wartime, an activity deemed a violation of the federal Espionage and Sedition Act. Haywood died in Moscow in 1928. Half his ashes were buried in the Kremlin, the other half in Chicago near the monument to the Haymarket martyrs, leaders of the fight for the eight-hour day who were executed in 1887.

The ILD was founded especially to take up the plight of class-war prisoners in the United States. Initially, the ILD adopted 106 prisoners for its stipend program, including California labor leaders Tom Mooney and Warren Billings, framed up for a bombing at the Preparedness Day parade in San Francisco in 1916, and Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, immigrant anarchist workers executed in 1927 for a robbery/murder they did not commit. The number grew rapidly: Zeigler miners in Illinois whose fights over wages and working conditions pitted them head-on against the KKK; striking textile workers in Passaic, New Jersey. The ILD monthly, *Labor Defender*, educated tens of thousands of workers about the struggles of their class brothers and carried letters from prisoners describing their cases and the importance of ILD support.

Many of the imprisoned militants were IWW members. After a brief membership in the Socialist Party (SP), Cannon himself had been an IWW organizer and a writer for its press. Witnessing the anarcho-syndicalist IWW crushed by the bourgeois state while a disciplined Marxist party led a successful proletarian revolution in Russia, Cannon rejoined the SP in order to hook up with its developing pro-Bolshevik left wing. In 1919, that left wing exited the SP, with Cannon becoming a founding leader of the American Communist movement. He brought a wealth of experience in labor defense. As Cannon later recalled, "I came from the background of the old movement when the one thing that was absolutely sacred was unity on behalf of the victims of capitalist justice."

In the year preceding the executions of Sacco and Vanzetti, the ILD and sections of the International Red Aid led mass actions in their defense, including protests and strikes of tens of thousands on the eve of the executions. The SP and pro-capitalist union tops undermined the growing workers mobilization by looking to the political agencies of the class enemy, a policy accompanied by a vicious anti-Communist campaign of slander and exclusion. Cannon addressed the two conflicting policies:

> "One policy is the policy of the class struggle. It puts the center of gravity in the protest movement of the workers of America and the world. It puts all faith in the power of the masses and no faith whatever in the justice of the courts. While favoring all possible legal proceedings, it calls for agitation, publicity, demonstrations—organized protest on a national and international scale.... The other policy is the policy of 'respectability,' of the 'soft pedal' and of ridiculous illusions about 'justice' from the courts of the enemy. It relies mainly on legal proceedings. It seeks to blur the issue of the class struggle."
>
> —"Who Can Save Sacco and Vanzetti?" (*Labor Defender*, January 1927)

The principle of non-sectarian, class-struggle defense has guided our work, in particular our more than two-decade struggle to free Mumia Abu-Jamal. As a small organization, we don't pretend that we are able to mobilize the type of hard class struggle that not only built the unions in this country but also harnessed the social power of the working class to the defense of labor's imprisoned soldiers in the class war. Such struggles are today a very faint memory. Nor do we want to distribute rose-colored glasses through which even the most minimal stirrings against particular atrocities by the racist capitalist rulers appear as sea changes in the political climate—a practice that is common fare for sundry proclaimed socialists.

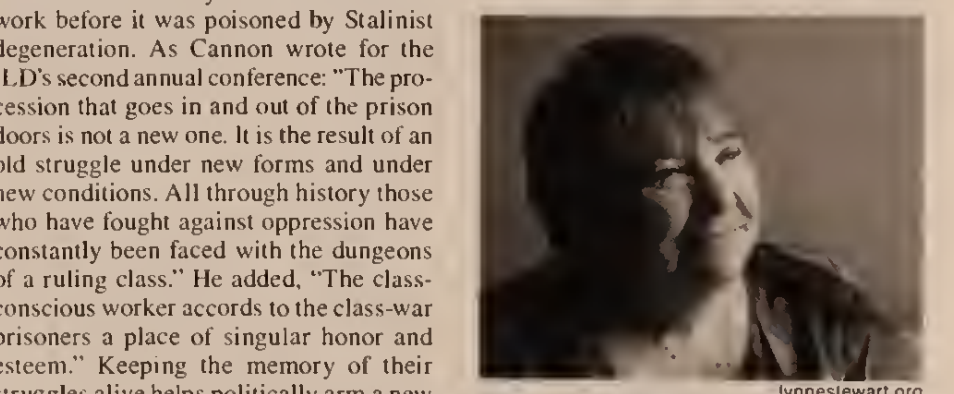
Instead, we are dedicated to educating a new generation of fighters in the best traditions of the early Communist defense work before it was poisoned by Stalinist degeneration. As Cannon wrote for the ILD's second annual conference: "The procession that goes in and out of the prison doors is not a new one. It is the result of an old struggle under new forms and under new conditions. All through history those who have fought against oppression have constantly been faced with the dungeons of a ruling class." He added, "The class-conscious worker accords to the class-war prisoners a place of singular honor and esteem." Keeping the memory of their struggles alive helps politically arm a new generation of fighters against the prison that is capitalist society. We urge *WV* readers to honor the prisoners by supporting the Holiday Appeal.

The 21 class-war prisoners receiving stipends from the PDC are listed below.

* * *

Mumia Abu-Jamal is a former Black Panther Party spokesman, a well-known supporter of the MOVE organization and an award-winning journalist known as "the voice of the voiceless." Framed up for the 1981 killing of a Philadelphia police officer, Mumia was sentenced to death explicitly for his political views. Federal and state courts have repeatedly refused to consider evidence proving Mumia's innocence, including the sworn confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, shot and killed the policeman. In 2011 the Philadelphia district attorney's office dropped its longstanding effort to legally lynch America's foremost class-war prisoner. Mumia remains condemned to life in prison with no chance of parole.

Leonard Peltier is an internationally renowned class-war prisoner. Peltier's incarceration for his activism in the American Indian Movement has come to symbolize this country's racist repression of its native peoples, the survivors of centuries of genocidal oppression. Peltier was framed up for the 1975 deaths of two FBI agents marauding in what had become a war zone on the South Dakota Pine Ridge Reservation. Although the lead government attorney has admitted, "We can't prove who shot those agents," and the courts have acknowledged blatant prosecutorial misconduct, the 69-year-old



lynnestewart.org

Lynne Stewart

Peltier is not scheduled to be reconsidered for parole for another eleven years! Peltier suffers from multiple serious medical conditions and is incarcerated far from his people and family.

Eight **MOVE** members—**Chuck Africa, Michael Africa, Debbie Africa, Janet Africa, Janine Africa, Delbert Africa, Eddie Africa** and **Phil Africa**—are in their 36th year of prison. After the 8 August 1978 siege of their Philadelphia home by over 600 heavily armed cops, they were sentenced to 30-100 years having been falsely convicted of killing a police officer who died in the cops' own cross fire. In 1985, eleven of their MOVE family members, including five children, were massacred by Philly cops when a bomb was dropped on their living quarters. After more than three decades of unjust incarceration, these innocent prisoners are routinely turned down at parole hearings. None have been released.

Lynne Stewart is a lawyer imprisoned in 2009 for defending her client, a blind

continued on page 6

WV Photo

NYC, October 1999: Trade unionists were backbone of PDC-initiated labor/black mobilization to stop KKK race terrorists.

From Death Row to "Slow Death Row"

For over 20 years, a central focus of the PDC Holiday Appeals was the urgent fight to free Mumia Abu-Jamal from the executioner's hands. A former Black Panther Party spokesman, renowned journalist and MOVE supporter, Mumia was framed for the 1981 killing of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner and sentenced to die explicitly for his political beliefs. First taking up Mumia's defense in 1987, the PDC and the Spartacist League made his case known through publicity and protest to a wide range of death penalty abolitionists, student groups, black activists and the labor movement. From the beginning, we fought for the understanding that the power of labor must be brought to bear in the fight to win Mumia's freedom. Indeed, it was an outpouring of protest internationally, including by trade unionists, which helped win a stay of execution for Mumia in August 1995.

Mumia's conviction was based on lying testimony extorted by the cops, a "confession" manufactured by the police and prosecutors and phony ballistics evidence. Time and again, federal and state courts refused to even consider the massive evidence that Mumia was innocent, including the confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, shot and killed Faulkner. In December 2011, ten years after a ruling by a federal judge that overturned Mumia's death sentence, the Philly district attorney's office announced that it would no longer pursue Mumia's legal lynching, finally removing him from death row to what he termed the "slow death row" of life in prison without possibility of parole.

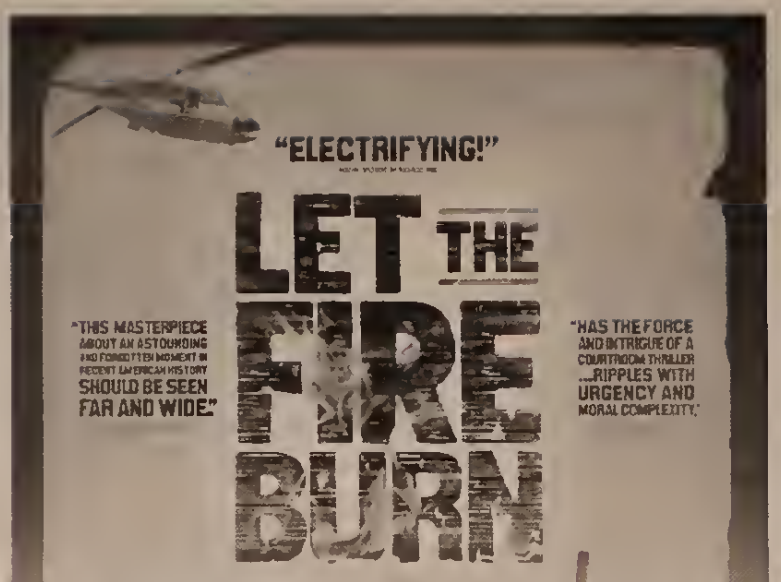
Workers World

Mumia Abu-Jamal

The deprivation of basic rights that marked his trial and imprisonment continues unabated. For nearly a month after he was released from death row, Mumia was held in solitary confinement. Then in August 2012, he was secretly resentenced in direct violation of Pennsylvania law, which mandates a hearing where the prisoner has the right to be present and heard. Mumia's appeal of that backroom sentencing, filed in February, was unanimously rejected in July by the Pennsylvania Superior Court.

It appears that Mumia's legal efforts to win his freedom have now hit a brick wall—not even the prospect of parole awaits him. In commenting on the denial of his most recent appeal, Mumia told two PDC representatives who visited him in August that state authorities never want to see Mumia in their courtroom again. Despite this, Mumia remains strong, unbowed, politically engaged and writing prolifically. In addition to his own musical studies, we discussed the musical genius of Curtis Mayfield, the latest excrescences of the U.S. "war on terror," the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's killer, the documentary *Long Distance Revolutionary* about Mumia that was released early this year, the struggle to finally win the right to a contact visit with his son Jamal Hart and the prospects of a Miami Heat "three-peat."

It has been many years since thousands took to the streets for Mumia. As the PDC said after the D.A.'s efforts to kill him were abandoned: "The state authorities hope with the latest decision that Mumia's cause will be forgotten and that he will rot in prison hell until he dies. This must not be Mumia's fate."



A Powerful Documentary on the 1985 Bombing of MOVE

A Review by Conor Kristofersen

On 13 May 1985, black Democratic mayor Wilson Goode and his city administration, acting in collaboration with the Feds, firebombed the West Philadelphia home of the MOVE organization, a mostly black, back-to-nature commune. It was the culmination of a daylong police siege, during which over 10,000 rounds of ammunition had been pumped into the house. With the Fire Department under orders to "let the fire burn," high-pressure water cannon on site sat idle for over an hour. In the ensuing inferno, eleven people were incinerated, including five children, and hundreds were left homeless as an entire city block in the black working-class neighborhood was reduced to ashes.

The operation to "evict" those inside MOVE's Osage Avenue home, which resembled more the leveling of a Vietnamese village, began with the proclamation: "Attention, MOVE. This is America!" Indeed, the hideous crime that followed was a concentrated expression of the racist state terror meted out to black people every day in capitalist America. None of the perpetrators ever faced charges, while Ramona Africa, the sole adult survivor, was arrested and served every day of a seven-year prison sentence. The only other person to make it out of the MOVE house alive was 13-year-old Birdie Africa, later known as Michael Ward, who recently died at the age of 41.

From the day of the massacre, and ever since, the Spartacist League has solidarized with the victims of this racist atrocity and vowed to sear it into the memory of the working class. The recently released documentary *Let the Fire Burn* is a valuable tool for this very purpose, making it a must-see. The director and producer, Jason Osder, has described in interviews the impact that the bombing of MOVE had on him as an eleven-year-old growing up in Philly. He spent more than ten years collecting clips from television news programs, police videos and other archival film footage that comprise the documentary. The result is a vivid chronicle of the day of the slaughter and its background, namely the ever-escalating cop vendetta against MOVE, a group that first appeared in 1972 denouncing "the system" and would come to proclaim the right of armed self-defense in the face of brutal state repression.

Minimal narration (in the form of captions) is given to this footage in an effort by Osder to force his viewers to "interpret and deal with" the events of May 13. What filmgoers are forced to deal with are the visceral and shocking images of mass murder by the state that the capitalist rulers would prefer for people to forget. There is no escaping the devastating explosion of MOVE's roof, the flames that engulf Osage Avenue and the unapologetic racism of the cops. In one of the more shocking moments, cops can be heard laughing and joking in the background of a police video of the burning house: "They won't call the police commissioner a motherf----r anymore!" The cover-up is also evident, with Mayor Goode and Police Commissioner Gregore Sambor shown blatantly lying and contradicting each other's stories about who ordered who to put out the fire, if anyone had at all.

Zeitgeist Films

Philadelphia: The 13 May 1985 bombing of MOVE house on Osage Avenue killed eleven people, including five children. An entire black neighborhood was burned to the ground.

The bombing polarized the "city of brotherly love." In its aftermath, liberals and virtually the entire left rushed to alibi Goode, Philly's first black mayor, who vowed: "I'd do it again." These apologists for Goode exuded disdain for the intended victims of racist state repression, even as they expressed shock at the "excessive" force and the harm done to blacks whose houses were burned down in the process. Among those groups attempting to straddle the line between MOVE and its murderers was the Socialist Workers Party, which helped organize a May 30 demo in Philadelphia, purportedly to protest the massacre. We initially pledged to mobilize 100 supporters to stand with MOVE, which was planning to attend. But after the organizers had the gall to debate whether to censor MOVE at the protest, MOVE pulled out and in solidarity so did the SL. The demonstration was a travesty, with the emcee announcing that organizers "wanted it to be made very clear to the city administration and the City of Philadelphia that we are not marching today in support of MOVE" (*Philadelphia Daily News*, 31 May 1985).

Some weeks later, we held a public forum in New York City where MOVE supporters LaVerne Sims and Louise James were able to express their outrage and pain. In the discussion period, a member of the League for the Revolutionary Party (LRP) rose to denounce us for not sufficiently polemicizing against MOVE—at a public meeting specifically called to honor the memory of the MOVE martyrs! To attack them would have been obscene. But that's exactly what the LRP did. In its publication *Proletarian Revolution* (Summer 1985), the LRP blamed the victims, writing: "MOVE's isolation opened it up for a police siege."

The mass murder of MOVE members was a signature act of the Reagan years, which were marked by a concerted drive to reverse the gains of the civil rights movement and other social struggles of the 1960s and early '70s. The bourgeoisie had also thrown down the gauntlet before the organized workers movement, exemplified in the mass firing of 13,000 striking members of the PATCO air traffic controllers union by the White House in 1981. This all-sided social reaction was the domestic reflection of U.S. imperialism's Cold War push to "roll back Communism" internationally, from the threats of nuclear annihilation of the Soviet Union to efforts to crush leftist insurgents in Central America. Only days before the MOVE bombing, Reagan had returned from saluting Nazi SS graves in Bitburg, Germany.

As we wrote in our front-page article "Philly Inferno: Racist Murder!" (*WV* No. 380, 31 May 1985), which was part of our coverage of the atrocity reprinted in *Black History and the Class Struggle* No. 3 (February 1986):

> "The Osage Avenue massacre was supposed to be a message to anybody who gets 'out of line' in Reagan's America—blacks will get the Philly treatment, labor will get the PATCO treatment and everyone, not least the Marxists, will get the 'terrorist' treatment. But you can fight the terrorists in City Hall and the White House and win. Black people do have social power: they are concentrated in some of the key sections of the American proletariat, constituting its most militant layer. But to unlock this power means breaking the capitalist two-party stranglehold, fighting for a workers party to mobilize labor and oppressed blacks in revolutionary struggle against this racist, capitalist system. Avenge the Philly inferno—For black freedom through socialist revolution!"

Lies and Racist Mass Murder

For all its merits, *Let the Fire Burn* shies away from addressing a vital part of the story of the MOVE bombing: the fact that the responsibility for this horrendous crime went well beyond Mayor Wilson Goode and his ghoulish coterie of Philly cops and extended right up to the Ronald Reagan White House. The film leans heavily on footage of the investigation commission that was set up by Goode to absolve his administration but which nonetheless was compelled by the sheer magnitude of the massacre to reveal its horrors. Yet *Let the Fire Burn* does not even allude to some of the most important

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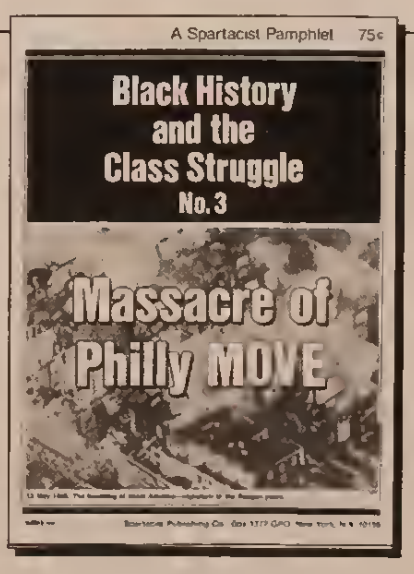
WV Photo

MOVE supporters LaVerne Sims (at mic) and Louise James at July 1985 Spartacist forum held in NYC in solidarity with MOVE martyrs.



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New York, NY 10116

MOVE...

(continued from page 5)

testimony before those hearings, which implicated the Feds in what was a carefully planned conspiracy to commit state terrorism.

Even before the commission was convened, chief Sambor told the *New York Times* (19 May 1985) that two days before the bombing he had gone over the assault plans with FBI agents, who "found the plan sound." At the hearings, both Samhor and Goode's managing director, Leo Brooks, who was nominally in charge of the operation, testified that the use of explosives had heen planned for over a year. The commission obtained evidence from the FBI that agents had supplied Philly cops with nearly 40 pounds of the military explosive C-4. Other testimony before the commission revealed that the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms helped the city ohtain military-grade arms for the assault, including Browning automatic rifles, an M-60 machine gun and an anti-tank gun.

Mayor Goode's handpicked eleven-member commission would later seek to whitewash the cofdblooded state murder in the report on the findings of its nine-month investigation. The commission acknowledged the obvious racism behind the assault and dcclared that the deaths of the five children "appear to be unjustified homicides." At the same time, it called MOVE "an authoritarian violence-threatening cult," implying the adults deserved to die!

Washington's role was apparently too hot for the commission members to handle, so they went to absurd lengths to avoid implicating federal authorities. While noting that an FBI agent had delivered the C-4 plastic explosive to the Philadelphia police, the commission report claimed that "neither agency kept any records of the transaction." As such, the report concluded that FBI officials "unwittingly furnished the commission with inaccurate and untruthful accounts of that agency's involvement."

Years-Long Campaign of State Terror

The film depicts the odd lifestyle and social views of MOVE and shows them shouting obscenities at their neighbors and the cops over outdoor loudspeakers. A wave of racist propaganda painting MOVE as violent crazies accompanied the 1985 slaughter. In Reagan's America, to be black and a social nuisance was enough to be made a non-person and homhed to smithereens. In fact, the eclectic MOVE group reflects a long tradition in this country of attempted non-cooperation with the state on moral, religious or political grounds, from Quaker pacifists who refuse to fight in wars to right-wing tax resisters.

The cop vendetta against MOVE got its start at a time when Philadelphia was lorded over by Mayor Frank Rizzo, a law-and-order racist. In one scene in the film, he rails against a "vocal minority" that has supposedly gained undue influence over the country. Under his direction, police planted themselves on MOVE's doorstep, hounding members and supporters every time they left their home. Arbitrary stops, beatings and arrests hecame the norm. In 1976, hlackjack-wielding cops descended on a MOVE celebration, and in the resulting melee Janine Africa's newhorn infant was trampled to death.

Beginning in May 1977, the cops put MOVE under round-the-clock surveillance. The following March, police set up a full-scale barricade, sealing off a four-block area of MOVE's Powelton Village commune with eight-foot-high fences and cutting off gas and water service. Early on August 8, 600 cops surrounded the home. One member of the Philly cops' notorious "Stakeout" squad, James Ramp, was killed hy his fellow cops when they opened fire on the house. In the documentary, a brief clip of a witness insistently pointing at the source of the gunfire is included, followed by the caption: "MOVE members believed there was a police cover-up and that officer Ramp was actually killed by friendly fire."

Nine MOVE members were framed up for that killing and eight remain imprisoned to this day, one having died in prison. Radical journalist and former Black Panther Mumia Abu-Jamal would become a supporter of MOVE in the course of reporting on the trial. Already known and despised by local police, Mumia became even more of a marked man as a result.

In the film, officers recounting the 1978 assault to the commission state that Delbert Africa emerged from the house with a knife and was then subdued. The documentary then jumps to footage of the scene showing an unarmed Delbert Africa with empty hands raised in the air. Cops proceed to almost beat him to death, slamming his head into the ground with their boots.

Little changed for the oppressed black masses after Rizzo left office in early 1980. The campaign against MOVE continued unabated for several years, building up

AP

Philly's Democratic mayor Wilson Goode with Police Commissioner Gregore Sambor at right, three days after bombing.

to 13 May 1985. The documentary shows the overwhelming firepower deployed by the state that day: water cannons, tear gas, automatic weapons and, finally, the powerful mixture of Tovex and C-4 dropped by helicopter on the roof of MOVE's Osage Avenue home. As the house burned, police were stationed at key locations in a back alley with shotguns and Uzis. When two MOVE members emerged from the blaze, one was gunned down by the cops and the other, a child, was driven hack inside to die in the fire.

While some cops may relish it more than others, their joh is to enforce racist law and order on behalf of the capitalist rulers. Toward the end of *Let the Fire Burn*, the film highlights the testimony before the commission by one cop who recalled leading Birdie Africa away after he emerged from the hurning building. A caption concludes his story: the cop's locker was later scrawled with the epithet "n----r lover" and he left the police force, suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder.

Of Racist Cops and Black Democrats

Going back before MOVE, Philadelphia was known for its killer cops. Foremost among them were those in the Stakeout unit, an urban death squad made up largely of veteran military sharpshooters. This squad was established by Rizzo, then-deputy police commissioner, as part of the drive by the city rulers to crush any expression of opposition to vicious racism and police brutality after the city's black ghetto erupted in 1964. Together with the department's "red squad," it spearheaded the brutal repression of the Black Panther Party and other black militants in the city. Later, when the police turned their attention to MOVE, Stakeout cops again played a forward role, from the vicious heating of Delhert Africa to the shooting in the Osage Avenue alley seven years later.

The city itself was a bastion of racist reaction. In the 1920s, Pennsylvania had the fourth-largest Klan concentration in the country; the Philadelphia area alone had 30,000 Klansmen. The city's capitalist rulers played on racial divisions to pit white workers against black workers, who were last-hired and first-fired. Ethnic and racial hostilities in Philadelphia were further exacerbated with the devastation of its heavy industry, particularly in the 1970s. In this context, the racist bonapartism of the Philadelphia police hecame even more pronounced as the cops were deployed to keep the lid on this pressure cooker of discontent.

Another reaction by the ruling class to black discontent and rebellion in Philadelphia, as well as other cities across the country, was to install black mayors to contain the rage and frustration. But Wilson Goode—who instructed the cops to get MOVE "by any means necessary" prior to the firebombing of West Philadelphia—is the ultimate proof that the black Democratic mayors were and are the frontinen for tbe bourgeoisie's war on black people, as well as on workers and all the oppressed. In the aftermath of the fire, Jesse Jackson spotted in the charred remains of people's lives a chance to push a little black capitalism. His main concern was that Goode hire black contractors to rebuild the destroyed homes!

From the 1921 bombing of black Tulsa, Oklahoma, to the 1993 incineration of the Branch Davidian religious sect outside Waco, Texas, the American capitalist rulers have a long history of mass murder of those considered to have stepped out of line. When it came to MOVE, authorities first branded them "terrorists" to justify their slaughter. As we noted shortly after the 1985 massacre: "Our duty to combat the state vendetta against MOVE is part of our unremitting campaign against the government's targeting of troublesome opponents as 'terrorists'" (*WV* No. 381, 14 June 1985). This is all the more the case today, with the bourgeoisie having amassed a vast arsenal of surveillance and police powers under the pretext of the "war on terror." Ultimately, it will take a workers revolution to put the capitalist state apparatus of violence and murder out of business for good and bring justice to its hired thugs who have committed untold crimes.■

Class-War Prisoners...

(continued from page 4)

Egyptian cleric convicted for an alleged plot to blow up New York City landmarks in the early 1990s. Stewart is a well-known advocate who defended Black Panthers, radical leftists and others reviled by the capitalist state. She was originally sentenced to 28 months; a resentencing pursued by the Obama administration more than quadrupled her prison time to ten years. As she is 74 years old and suffers from Stage IV breast cancer that has spread to her lungs and back, this may well be a death sentence. Stewart qualifies for immediate compassionate release, but Obama's Justice Department refuses to make such a motion before the resentencing judge, who has all but stated that he would grant her release!

Jaan Laaman and **Thomas Manning** are the two remaining anti-imperialist activists known as the Ohio 7 still in prison, convicted for their roles in a radical group that took credit for bank "expropriations" and bombings of symhols of U.S. imperialism, such as military and corporate offices, in the late 1970s and '80s. Before their arrests in 1984 and 1985, the Ohio 7 were targets of massive manhunts. The Ohio 7's politics were

Ryerson/Lincoln Journal Star

Mondo we Langa

once shared by thousands of radicals, hut, like the Weathermen before them, the Ohio 7 were spurned by the "respectable" lcft. From a proletarian standpoint, the actions of these leftist activists against imperialism and racist injustice are not a crime. They should not have served a day in prison.

Ed Poindexter and **Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa** are former Black Panther supporters and leaders of the Omaha, Nebraska, National Committee to Combat Fascism. They are victims of the FBI's deadly COINTELPRO operation, under which 38 Black Panther Party members were killed and hundreds more imprisoned on frame-up charges. Poindexter and Mondo were railroaded to prison and sentenced to life for a 1970 explosion that

Michael Richardson

Ed Poindexter

killed a cop, and they have now spent more than 40 years behind bars. Nebraska courts have repeatedly denied Poindexter and Mondo new trials despite the fact that a crucial piece of evidence excluded from the original trial, a 911 audio tape long suppressed by the FBI, proved that testimony of the state's key witness was perjured.

Hugo Pinell, the last of the San Quentin 6 still in prison, has been in solitary isolation for more than four decades. He was a militant anti-racist leader of prison rights organizing along with George Jackson, bis comrade and mentor, who was gunned down by prison guards in 1971. Despite numerous letters of support and no disciplinary write-ups for over 28 years, Pinell was again denied parole in 2009. Now in his late 60s, Pinell continues to serve a life sentence at the notorious torture chamber Pelican Bay SHU in California, a focal point for hunger strikes against grotesque inhuman conditions.

Jason Sutherlin, Cody Lee Sutherlin, Dylan Sutherlin, John Tucker and **Alex Stuck** were among some 18 anti-racist militants who, in the Chicago suburb of Tinley Park in May 2012, broke up a gathering of fascists called to organize a "White Nationalist Economic Summit." Among the vermin sent scurrying were some with links to the Stormfront Web site run by a former Ku Klux Klan grand dragon. Such fascist meetings are not merely right-wing discussion clubs but organizing centers for race-terror against black people, Jews, immigrants, gays and anyone else the white-supremacists consider subhuman. For their basic act of social sanitation, these five were sentenced by a Cook County court to prison terms of three and a half to six years on charges of "armed violence."

Contribute now! All proceeds from the Holiday Appeals will go to the Class-War Prisoners Stipend Fund. This is not chority but on elementary act of solidarity with those imprisoned for their opposition to racist copitolism and imperialist depredations. Send your contributions to: PDC, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013; (212) 406-4252.■

Canada's Racist "War on Drugs"

Toronto Cops Terrorize Immigrants, Minorities

The following article originally appeared in Spartacist Canada *No. 178 (Fall 2013), newspaper of our comrades of the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste.*

On June 13, over 800 cops carried out massive pre-dawn raids across Toronto and beyond. Ground zero of this quasi-military operation, dubbed "Project Traveller," was a set of apartment towers on Dixon Road in the Toronto suburb of Etobicoke. Populated in large part by refugees from Somalia, the area is widely known as "Little Mogadishu" after the Somali capital.

Brandishing machine guns, the police battered down doors as flash-bang grenades shook the crumbling, overcrowded apartments. Residents—children, youth, the elderly—awoke dizzy and disoriented from the blasts, police guns drawn in their faces. Cops roughed up a 100-year-old woman. Another elderly woman was pinned down, handcuffed and ordered to "die" as she pleaded for her medication. By the end of it all, the rampaging cops had made off with 44 people and $572,000 in cash as well as cellphones and computers, all in the name of a "war on drugs."

ctvnews.ca

Brutal police raid targets Toronto's Somali community, June 13.

"We came to Canada to get peace," a Somali community worker told a June 18 press conference called by the African Canadian Legal Clinic. The crowd heard how a 96-year-old Somali woman victimized in the raid now shouts "The soldiers are coming, they're coming" whenever she hears the door to her family residence open. Others in the heavily Somali crowd compared the cops in military-style uniforms to soldiers. Indeed, the parallels with their homeland were impossible to ignore. In 1993, under the guise of a "humanitarian" United Nations operation, U.S. and UN soldiers ravaged Mogadishu. The Canadian army played a full role in this, and soldiers of the Canadian Airborne, notorious for its violence and racism, tortured and murdered a Somali teenager, Shidane Arone.

It was during this period of civil war and brutal colonial war from the late 1980s to the mid-1990s that most Somali refugees—some 55,000—came to Canada. Eight thousand miles separate Mogadishu from Toronto, but Project Traveller drove home the message that while the tactics may change—sometimes only barely—the racist character of the Canadian state and its armed enforcers is fundamental.

Canadian capitalism offers a bleak future for immigrant youth. The destruction of manufacturing jobs has depleted the unions and come down hard on workers of minority backgrounds. Somalis in Canada are oppressed not only as blacks. Their Muslim origins place them squarely in the gunsights of the rulers' racist "war on terror," so it comes as no surprise that Somali youth in Toronto face an unemployment rate of 70 percent.

At the community press conference that followed the Dixon Road raid, outpourings against decrepit housing conditions and police violence went hand in hand. One woman said that when she asked her landlord to help repair her door, which the cops had bashed in, he replied, "your son is a criminal." Meanwhile the cops' "Somali Liaison Unit" continued to stalk the tenements. In the tradition of occupying armies they patronizingly handed out candy to children.

The Dixon Road raid revealed the cops as the hating and hated predators of vulnerable minorities. Reports that they punctuated their so-called drug bust with violent sadism and racist epithets surprised only the most naive. "They say they've dismantled the gangs," charged a youth activist named Kabir at a June 20 "community meeting" run by the cops. "I don't know a single gang that beats hundred-year-old women. They have no shame." The crowd then erupted and the presiding sergeant unplugged the microphone, putting an end to this charade of "community consultation."

This cop thus demonstrated in miniature the workings of democracy under the present system, which Marxists recognize to be a dictatorship of the capitalist class. The cops, together with prison guards, the courts and the army, form the core of that dictatorship, otherwise known as the capitalist state. Their job is to defend the interests of the tiny, super-wealthy capitalist class that exploits the millions of people in this country who must sell their labour power to survive.

Hardly a week passes without new reports of cops fabricating evidence, lying in court, beating a suspect, gunning people down or stealing drugs and money. A few trials of the more egregious police malefactors have grabbed headlines recently, including a couple of the cops who carried out vicious beatings of G20 protesters three years ago. Even in the face of overwhelming evidence, not one has been found guilty of any crime. Far from an aberration, these trials are an effective demonstration of the workings of the bourgeois justice system. The cop in the dock, the judge and the crown prosecutor are not adversaries but partners. It is the essence of bourgeois justice that G20 protest leaders are jailed while the cops who brutalized hundreds of protesters and arrested over 1,100 emerge unscathed.

From Somalia to Haiti and Afghanistan, to the countless outrages here at home, it is abundantly clear that the capitalist state can never be made to serve the interests of oppressed peoples. Thus we of the Trotskyist League oppose dead-end calls for "community control" of the police, which only divert justified anger into renewed illusions of a "reformed" status quo. Against such schemes it is necessary to advance the perspective for ***workers revolution to smash the capitalist state.***

Ford's Follies and the "War on Drugs"

In May, two *Toronto Star* reporters revealed that they had seen a video of Toronto mayor Rob Ford smoking crack cocaine. The idea that Ford smoked crack shook up his allies in the "respectable" circles of the lily-white bourgeoisie. The story made headlines around the world and provided no end of fuel for late-night comedy shows. Yet it is Somali immigrants (along with people of Jamaican origin), who are bearing the brunt of the anti-drug hysteria.

Cops reportedly told their victims during the June raid that "we're here because of Rob Ford." Indeed, the *Star* reporters said 320 Dixon Road was where they saw the crack video. CTV News has reported that Toronto police were investigating the existence of a video involving Ford several weeks before news of the scandal flooded the media.

Whatever his private predilections, Ford is a bigoted "law and order" conservative and an unswerving supporter of the cops. In the aftermath of a grisly shooting in a predominantly black Toronto neighbourhood last year, he ranted against gangs, drugs and guns and demanded that people convicted of gun crimes be banished from Toronto under the immigration laws. (This elicited embarrassment from fellow Conservatives including the then federal Immigration Minister Jason Kenney.) Ford has made headlines again and again for disparaging gays, Asians and even the minority youth at the Catholic high school where he once coached football.

As Marxists, we oppose laws against drugs, as well as against all other "crimes

continued on page 9

Soviet Workers...

(continued from page 2)

economy." Unlike in Poland during the rise of Solidarność, the forces of capitalist counterrevolution were ***not*** able to mobilize the Soviet masses in the name of anti-Communism.

At the same time, the bureaucratic elite (the so-called nomenklatura) was totally discredited by the flagrant corruption and cynicism of the Brezhnev era. Occasional appeals to defend "socialism" made by the more conservative elements of the Gorbachev regime, such as Yegor Ligachev, fell on deaf ears. The Stalinist "patriots," organized for example in the United Front of Toilers (OFT), were able to mobilize only a relatively small number of worker activists.

Atomized and bereft of any anticapitalist leadership, lacking any coherent and consistent socialist class consciousness, skeptical about the possibility of class struggle in the capitalist countries, the Soviet working class did not rally in resistance against the encroaching capitalist counterrevolution. And, as Trotsky noted in *The Third International After Lenin*: "If an army capitulates to the enemy in a critical situation without a battle, then this capitulation completely takes the place of a 'decisive battle,' in politics as in war."...

The proletariat which made the October Revolution learned from Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks that it was part of an international struggle. It understood that its only prospect for survival lay in the extension of the revolution to more advanced industrial powers, chiefly Germany. The opportunities were manifold, but the revolutionary parties outside Soviet Russia were too weak and politically immature to pursue them. The German Spartakist uprising of 1918-19 and the 1919 Hungarian Commune went down to bloody defeat. The possibility of the Red Army marching to the aid of the German workers in 1920 by unleashing proletarian revolution in Pilsudski's Poland was foiled. Finally, with the defeat of the German October in 1923, the Soviet proletariat succumbed to the demoralizing prospect of a lengthy period of isolation, which allowed the bureaucratic layer headed by Stalin to usurp political power. Thus was the revolution betrayed.

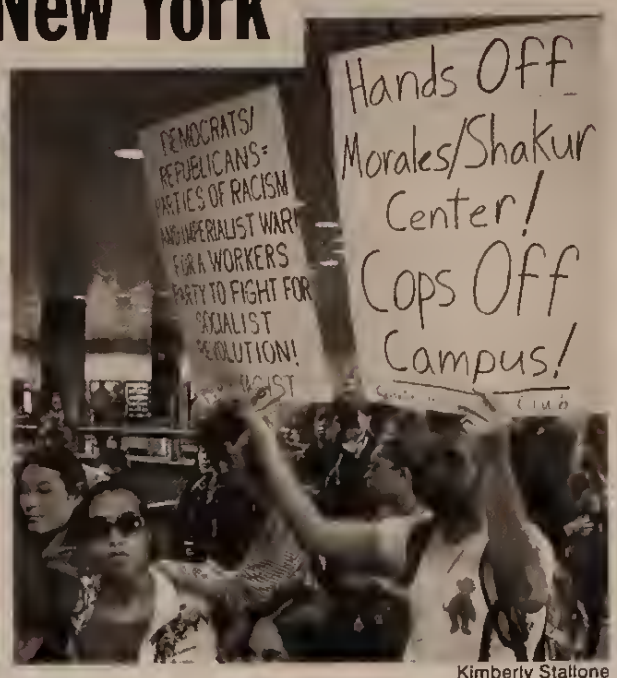
But this betrayal did not go unchallenged. The Left Opposition of Leon Trotsky continued the struggle for the authentic program of Leninism. In its struggle to defend and extend Soviet power, the Left Opposition urged a policy of planned industrialization to revive the enervated proletariat and enable the isolated workers state to hold out against imperialist encirclement. The Trotskyists fought uncompromisingly against the nascent bureaucracy's Great Russian chauvinism. They fought against the treacherous policies emanating from "socialism in one country," in the first instance the subversion of the Chinese Revolution of 1925-27 and the Anglo-Russian trade-union bloc which led to the knifing of the 1926 British General Strike. This led to the subordination of the German working class to Hitler's jackboot, to the outright suppression of the Spanish revolution in the late 1930s. By selling out revolutionary opportunities at the end of World War II, particularly in Italy, France and Greece, Stalinism enabled capitalism to survive, and thus prepared the way for its own ultimate demise.

With the utter liquidation of the Communist International as an instrument for world revolution, Trotsky organized the founding of the Fourth International in 1938. Today the International Communist League fights for the rebirth of the Fourth International, whose cadre were decimated by Stalinist and Hitlerite terror and which finally succumbed in the early 1950s to an internal revisionist challenge which denied the need for an independent revolutionary leadership. Only as part of the struggle to reforge an authentic world party of socialist revolution can the workers of the former Soviet Union cohere the leadership they need to sweep away the grotesque horrors they now confront. ■

Young Spartacus

City College of New York

Shay Horse/Facebook



Kimberly Stallone

Left: October 24 "Defend the Morales/Shakur Center" rally at CCNY, where two were arrested. Right: Emergency protest against closing of center, October 21.

Reinstate the Morales/Shakur Center! Cops Off Campus!

We reprint below an October 26 leaflet issued by the New York Spartacus Youth Club. The City College of New York (CCNY) is one of 24 public colleges and schools that make up the City University of New York (CUNY). As we go to press, the Guillermo Morales/Assata Shakur Community and Student Center, a room in CCNY's North Academic Center (NAC), is still shut down with a sign above the door that reads, "Careers and Professional Development Institute."

The Spartacus Youth Club denounces the outrageous eviction of the Morales/Shakur Center by the CCNY administration on October 20. As the Center was raided and all of its contents confiscated, campus cops shut down the entire NAC building, arresting a CUNY alumnus. The timing of this raid is no coincidence, coming off weeks of CUNY protests against the reinstatement of the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) military recruiters and the appointment of war criminal David Petraeus as a visiting professor. At an anti-Petraeus protest on September 17, cops brutally attacked the crowd and six protesters were arrested, all part of an attempt by the CUNY administration to stifle leftist activism. The sinister eviction of the Morales/Shakur Center represents an attack on the democratic rights of all campus groups to organize. *Reinstate the Morales/Shakur Center! Drop all charges against CUNY protesters! ROTC and Petraeus out of CUNY!*

The Morales/Shakur Center was a space for leftist, minority and other student groups and community organizations to hold meetings and events. Assata Shakur is a former Black Panther who was framed up for the 1973 killing of a New Jersey state trooper. Guillermo Morales was a member of the FALN, a Puerto Rican nationalist group. Shakur is now being hunted by the FBI as part of a racist "anti-terror" vendetta.

The CUNY administration is currently considering a new draconian policy on "expressive activity," i.e., campus protests. The proposed rules enhance the powers of the administration to crack down on protest and other political activity. Along with this attack on democratic rights, the CUNY Board of Trustees has been on a drive to make the city university more exclusive, making it harder for black, Latino, poor and immigrant students to attend. CCNY, which sits in the middle of Harlem, has seen the enrollment of black students plummet in the last 10 years, from 31.2% in 2001 to 14.4% in 2010. In 2011 a new round of tuition hikes was pushed through—accompanied by the violent repression of students who protested it. This was just the latest wave in a decades-long campaign to reverse the gains of the 1969 student strike, which won open admissions fur high school graduates to CUNY's community colleges and lowered entrance requirements at the four-year universities. In 1976 tuition was imposed for the first time in 129 years and has gone up steadily. Open admissions has been whittled away over the years, and was completely gutted in 1999. *We fight for free, quality, integrated education with a full stipend! For open admissions! Abolish the student debt!*

The Morales/Shakur Center was won in 1989 as a result of massive student struggle against tuition hikes at CUNY. But under capitalism these gains are always reversible. Universities under capitalism serve the purpose of upholding bourgeois ideology and training the next layer of technicians and managers. We hold no illusions in the administration to act in the interest of students—we say *abolish the administration, for student-teacher-worker control of the university!* In order to remove the universities from the control of the bourgeoisie, you need a workers revolution to sweep away the whole capitalist system. Students, who have no real social power to transform society, must ally with the multiracial working class which can bring production to a halt. To do away with the decaying capitalist system, we need a socialist revolution.

At the recent protests in defense of the Center, some students have expressed the view that the campus cops work for the students since the students pay tuition. The Revolutionary Student Coordinating Committee also peddles illusions that the cops can be pressured into serving students and the oppressed by calling for "any security force to be controlled by the community" (RSCC Platform). In reality the cops carry out the orders of the administration and the capitalist state, not the students. The role of all cops under capitalism is to defend the interests of the bourgeoisie—they cannot be reformed. The brutal enforcement of capitalist rule is their job, whether in the ghettos and barrios, on the picket lines, or on the campuses. *Cops off campus!*

With the mayoral elections approaching, students and workers are being told to place their hopes in the liberal populist de Blasio. The illusion is that this capitalist politician will bring some relief from the racist police brutality, union-busting and attacks on democratic rights that marked Bloomberg's years. Don't be fooled! Whether it's through Wall Street Democrat Obama or more left-talking local politicians like de Blasio, Ydanis Rodriguez or Charles Barron—the Democratic Party is charged with defending the interests of the racist, imperialist capitalist system. And don't forget it was Democrat Obama's FBI that increased Assata Shakur's bounty to $2 million. *Break with the Democrats!* We need a class-struggle workers party independent of and in opposition to all parties of capitalist rule. If you are interested in a program to get rid of capitalism and imperialism once and for all, check out the Marxist Spartacus Youth Club, youth group of the Spartacist League, and our paper, *Workers Vanguard*.■

Rescind Suspensions of CCNY Protesters!

We print below an October 28 protest letter by the New York Spartacus Youth Club.

The New York Spartacus Youth Club (SYC) denounces the outrageous suspension of City College of New York (CCNY) students Tafadar Sourov and Khalil Vasquez. On October 28, 2013, the students were approached by campus police, their student identification was revoked, and they were suspended and banned from the campus effective immediately. The suspension of these students is a blatant act of retaliation against those who have protested at CCNY against the eviction of the Morales/Shakur Center by the CCNY administration. The SYC stands in solidarity with Sourov and Vasquez! This is an attack on the democratic rights of all students, faculty and workers on campus. We demand that their suspension be revoked and that they be reinstated and allowed back on the CCNY campus immediately!

* * *

***YSp* Update:** The CCNY administration canceled the November 8 disciplinary hearing. Sourov and Vasquez, both activists in the Revolutionary Student Coordinating Committee (RSCC), refused to accept the CCNY administration's grotesque plea deal to temporarily lift the suspensions, provided the students agree to security monitoring and to end their political activities on campus ("We Will Not Compromise: CUNY Administration's Backroom Deal Revealed," RSCC Web posting, 7 November). As an SYC spokesman said in his speech at the November 8 defense rally, attended by dozens of students and faculty, "Drop the suspensions now! And cops off campus! This crackdown on leftist groups was a direct response to the anti-Petraeus and anti-ROTC protests. We also say, ROTC and Petraeus off campus now!"

The hearing has been rescheduled for November 15. Protest statements can be directed to: Juana Reina, Vice President of Student Affairs, Wille Administration Building, Room A 204, 160 Cunvent Avenue, New York, NY 10031, telephone (212) 650-5426, fax (212) 650-7080, e-mail studentaffairs@ccny.cuny.edu.

Spartacus Youth Club Forum

From Maoism to Trotskyism

NEW YORK CITY

Wednesday, November 20, 7 p.m.

CCNY, NAC, Room 1/211
138th St. and Amsterdam Ave.
Take #1 train to 137th St.
Information: (212) 267-1025 • nysl@tiac.net

Join the Spartacus Youth Clubs!

The Spartacus Youth Clubs intervene into social struggles armed with the revolutionary internationalist program of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. We work to mobilize youth in struggle as partisans of the working class, championing the liberation of black people, women and all the oppressed. The SYCs fight to win youth to the perspective of building the Leninist vanguard party that will lead the working class in socialist revolution, laying the basis for a world free of capitalist exploitation and imperialist slaughter.

What We Fight For

1 Mobilize students behind the social power of the multiracial working class! Picket lines mean don't cross! For union-run minority job recruitment and training programs! For union hiring halls! Down with union-busting "workfare" schemes! Jobs for all at union wages! Organize the unorganized! Unionize the South! Down with multi-tier wages, which pit younger and older workers against each other! Cops, prison guards, security guards out of the unions! Keep the bosses' government and courts out of the unions!

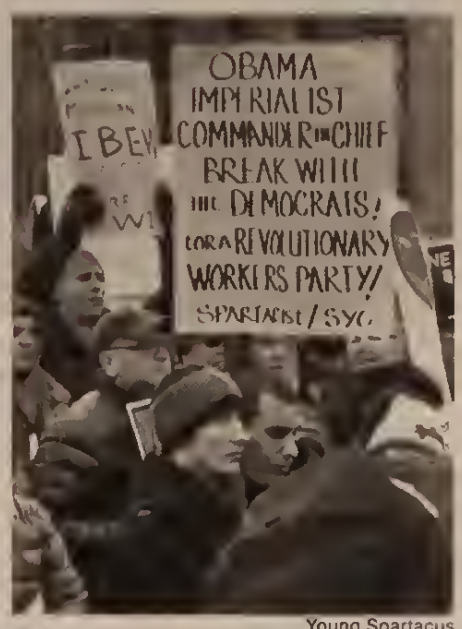
2 Black oppression is the bedrock of racist American capitalism. Finish the Civil War! For black liberation through socialist revolution! For mass labor/black mobilizations to stop the fascists and race-terrorists! No to gun control! For the right of armed self-defense! No reliance on the capitalist courts or politicians! Fascist terror is not a question of "free speech." Stop the Nazis! Stop the KKK!

3 For free, quality, integrated public education for all! Nationalize the private universities! Down with the racist purge of higher education—defend affirmative action, no to tuition hikes! No to budget cuts! For an end to tracking! For open admissions, no tuition and a state-paid living stipend for all students! Abolish the administration—the universities should be run by those who work and study there! Down with police occupation of public schools! Cops off campus!

4 For women's liberation through socialist revolution! For mass, labor-backed mobilizations to defend abortion clinics! Down with parental consent laws and "squeal rules"! For free abortion on demand! For free, quality 24-hour childcare! For free, quality health care for all! Equal pay for equal work! Down with anti-gay laws! Down with reactionary age of consent laws! Full democratic rights for homosexuals! Government out of the bedroom! Down with the anti-sex witchhunt! Down with all laws against consensual activities, called "crimes without victims," like pornography, gambling, drug use, prostitution and "statutory rape"!

5 Down with racist anti-immigrant laws! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! Organize foreign-born workers into the unions! No deportations! No to racist "English only" laws! Down with anti-Hispanic, anti-Arab, anti-Asian, anti-Semitic and all racist bigotry!

6 Down with the "war on terror," which is a war aimed at immigrants, labor, the left and minorities! Free all the detainees! Abolish the racist death penalty! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Free all class-war prisoners! There is no justice in the capitalist courts! Defend victims of racist cop terror and police frame-up! No illusions in civilian review boards or "community control" of the police! For labor mobilizations against racist cop



Young Spartacus

SYC at rally against union-busting, Madison, Wisconsin, March 2011.

terror! Down with the "war on drugs," a racist war by the ruling class against black and Hispanic youth! The capitalist state—at its core consisting of the cops, courts, prisons—is the executive committee of the ruling class, an instrument of organized violence by the capitalists against the workers and the oppressed. It must be smashed through workers revolution!

7 Defend separation of church and state! Defend science against superstition and mysticism! Keep religion out of the schools! No prayer in the schools! Down with the teaching of creationism! For the teaching of evolution! No government funding for religious, private or "charter" schools!

8 Defeat U.S. imperialism through workers revolution! U.S. and allied forces out of Iraq, Afghanistan now! Down with the neocolonial occupations! For class struggle against U.S. capitalist rulers at home! No illusions in the UN—a den of imperialist thieves, their victims and their lackeys! All U.S./UN/NATO troops out of the Balkans, Haiti! For the right of independence for Puerto Rico! U.S. troops out of Puerto Rico and the Caribbean! U.S. imperialist butchers: hands off the world! No to the draft! Not one man, not one penny for the imperialist military! Drive ROTC, CIA and police recruiters off the campuses!

9 For international working-class solidarity! Down with the chauvinist poison of protectionism! Workers of the world, unite! For unconditional military defense of the deformed workers states of Cuba, China, North Korea, Vietnam and Laos against capitalist counterrevolution and imperialist attack! For workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucrats and establish regimes of workers democracy, based on the power of workers councils, and revolutionary internationalism!

10 Break with the racist, warmongering Democratic and Republican parties of capitalism! No support to any capitalist parties, including Greens! For a revolutionary, multiracial workers party that fights for socialist revolution! Look to the example of the heroic, Bolshevik-led workers of 1917 Russia! For new October Revolutions! For the international rule of the working class!

15 May 2011

The Spartacus Youth Clubs are the youth groups of the revolutionary Marxist Spartacist League/U.S., section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

Toronto...

(continued from page 7)

without victims" like prostitution, pornography and gambling. Of course drug addiction, like alcoholism, can be dangerous—but this is a personal and medical matter, not one for the police.

Much of the police brutality against black youth today is conducted in the name of the "war on drugs." The issue here isn't drug use: whites and blacks alike partake of recreational drugs. The "war on drugs" battle cry is intended to give the cops license to stage raids, make sweeping arrests and otherwise terrorize the population of the city's heavily minority inner suburbs. It is now a standard trope for the ruling class whenever it feels the need to ratchet up state repression or scapegoat racial minorities for ills of its decaying social order. In 2009, a raid even larger than that at Dixon Road was carried out by over 1,000 cops over the whole Greater Toronto area. Over 125 were arrested. Like the "war on terror," the "war on drugs" is not a real war fought between states, but an ideological campaign with no ultimate aim or foreseeable end.

For our part, we could care less what Rob Ford smokes or drinks. His real crimes are against workers and the oppressed. He is a racist anti-gay bigot, a proven liar and a vicious labour-hater. He came into office vowing to get rid of thousands of city workers, contract out union jobs and slash social services. He indeed took on the unions and won the first round in 2012, thanks to a defeatist labour leadership that offered no perspective of struggle. The result was contracts that made unprecedented concessions and eliminated many of the impediments to contracting out and getting rid of unionized city workers. Today, garbage pickup in half of the city has been privatized.

Even as the Ford scandal roiled the media and his antics became an acute embarrassment to sections of the bourgeoisie, the major Toronto dailies—including the liberal *Toronto Star*—were careful to credit Ford for his crackdown on the unions. Indeed, the variant of right-wing populism Ford pushes is underpinned by hostility to organized labour, dressed up in fraudulent posturing on behalf of a mythical "little guy" taxpayer. Ford has already declared that his 2014 re-election campaign will centre on a continued attack on the city unions. In the face of a quiescent labour movement, this reactionary garbage continues to have traction.

For a Class-Struggle Fight Against Racial Oppression

The social power that can be mobilized on behalf of black youth and all the oppressed is to be found in the multiracial working class. The vast potential power of this class lies in its central role in production where its collective labour in the factories, transportation systems and other industries is exploited by the capitalists for profit. A serious labour counter-offensive would put paid to the supposed "public outrage" against the unions and it would garner widespread support among the city's beleaguered minority communities which are literally under the gun. A fighting labour movement would actively campaign against racist police terror, and demand ***full citizenship rights for all immigrants*** and ***jobs for all.***

Combatting racial oppression is essential to the unity of the working class. To beat back the bourgeoisie's attacks and triumph over the bankrupt rule of capital, the labour movement must consciously organize the active support of the oppressed: black youth facing police terror, desperate refugees and immigrants. Such a perspective requires a struggle to replace the current pro-capitalist union bureaucrats who have brought defeat after defeat, and forge a new leadership based on class struggle.

The working class is further hamstrung by the allegiance to the social-democratic NDP [New Democratic Party] that is promoted by most of the labour misleaders. Deeply loyal to the capitalists and their state, the New Democrats pander to the racist law-and-order demagogy of the ruling Conservatives. Under the late Jack Layton, the NDP called to hire thousands more cops, to "give police more tools to prosecute dangerous offenders" and to "make gang recruiting illegal." Last summer, around the time of Rob Ford's anti-gang rants, Toronto-Danforth NDP MP [Member of Parliament] Craig Scott declared that "street gangs are becoming more and more of a problem in this country." Scott went on to call for "putting more police into communities and creating dedicated youth gang prevention funds and activities." Putting more police into communities has meant nothing other than the hundreds-strong cop raid on the Somali tenements.

The struggle for a fighting labour movement that opposes racist oppression is inseparable from the perspective of breaking the unions from the politics of NDP-style social democracy. The indispensable tool for this struggle is a vanguard party of the working class. The Trotskyist League is committed to building such a revolutionary party, which would fight against all illusions in the racist, capitalist state, aiming to mobilize a class-conscious labour movement to overthrow this barbaric social system and replace it with the socialist rule of the multiracial working class. ■

Spartacus Youth Club Classes

BAY AREA
Tuesday, Nov. 19, 7 p.m.
For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!
San Francisco State University
Cesar Chavez Student Center
Rosa Parks D
Information and readings:
(510) 839-0851
sycbayarea@sbcglobal.net

CHICAGO
Saturday, Nov. 23, 1 p.m.
Lessons of the Paris Commune
222 S. Morgan (Third Floor, Buzz 23)
(Take blue line to UIC-Halsted stop)
Information and readings:
(312) 563-0441 • chicagosyc@sbcglobal.net

TORONTO
Wednesday, Nov. 20, 6:30 p.m.
The Capitalist State—Racist Police Terror and War
U of T, Sidney Smith Hall, Room 2104
100 St. George Street
Information and readings:
(416) 593-4138 • spartcan@on.aibn.com

Visit the ICL Web Site: www.icl-fi.org

Refugees...

(continued from page 12)

plan aims at tripling Italian military forces in the central Mediterranean through the deployment of military vessels, amphibious ships, drones and helicopters with infrared and optical instruments.

Bourgeois politicians at candlelight vigils in Rome and Brussels demanded that Italy not be left alone to deal with African immigrants. Sure enough, the EU answered their prayers by releasing money to reinforce the Frontex operation, a pan-European surveillance system whose objective is to reduce the number of immigrants entering Europe and to prevent "cross-border crime." Established in 2004, Frontex also includes African forces patrolling the territorial waters of Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Morocco, Mauritania and Senegal. The further strengthening of Frontex will mean even more deaths at sea, as routes will become even longer and more perilous.

Ever since the countries of Southern Europe began bringing in immigrant workers, the Mediterranean has become an open-air cemetery. No one can ascertain exactly how many immigrants have been swallowed by the sea, but estimates are that nearly 20,000 died in the last 25 years in the attempt to get to Europe after fleeing political, religious and ethnic persecution or simply starvation. A notorious case was that of the *Kater i Rades*, a ship that sailed from Albania in 1997 in the midst of political turmoil in that country. The ship was rammed and sunk by the Italian military vessel *Sibilla*, killing 81 people. At the time, Italy was governed by Romano Prodi's popular-front Olive Tree government, which was supported by the reformist Rifondazione Comunista (RC).

In 2011 alone, more than 1,500 people died at sea in the aftermath of the so-called "Arab spring" and the murderous NATO bombings of Qaddafi's Libya. In March of that year, a ship with 72 refugees from Libya was abandoned. It drifted at sea for more than two weeks, even though its position had been communicated to European authorities and NATO vessels and warplanes were monitoring every inch of the Gulf of Sirte and the Sicily Channel. Sixty-three people died of hunger and thirst, leaving only nine survivors to describe their ordeal.

Attempts by people to emigrate from North and sub-Saharan Africa continue to take a deadly toll. In late October, 87 immigrants were found dead of thirst in the northern Niger desert after their vehicles broke down. Four months before, a dozen Sudanese immigrants were fatally shot by Libyan border guards.

Demotix

Rome, October 18: Immigrant workers from outside EU join general strike called by Italian trade-union federations against bosses' austerity.

Colonialism and Racism: Bloodlines of "Humanitarian" Imperialism

The refugees who died in Lampedusa mostly came from the Horn of Africa and had set sail from the Libyan coast, an itinerary that crosses most of the countries that were the historical victims of Italian imperialism. Italy had partially succeeded in establishing colonies in East Africa by the end of the 19th century and colonized Libya in 1911 following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Under Mussolini's fascist regime, the Italian bourgeoisie was able to "reconquer" its empire, leaving the dead bodies of 500,000 Libyans and Ethiopians in its wake. The history of Italian colonialism in those countries is filled with atrocities: the bombing of villages; the massive use of chemical weapons like mustard gas, phosgene and arsine; the establishment of concentration camps and the starving to death of almost a half of the population of eastern Libya.

Today, capitalist politicians like to cover their aims with the rhetoric of "human rights." But the only right they recognize is ***their own*** right to exploit and plunder markets and the vast resources in oil, gas and other raw materials in African countries. Before the imperialist attack against Libya in 2011, Italy imported 25 percent of its oil and 13 percent of its gas from that country, in which the biggest Italian companies had strong interests.

The Left Ecology Freedom party's Laura Boldrini, speaker of the Italian Chamber of Deputies and former spokeswoman for the United Nations Human Rights Commission, has been elevated to the status of the "angel of the refugees." While she has asked that illegal immigration not be treated as a crime, Boldrini has also praised the Italian navy, coast guard and other state agencies for their supposedly "untold efforts to save human lives." Further, she has called on EU states to strengthen both their "monitoring and rescuing at sea" and efforts to promote "democratization" in the immigrants' countries of origin. Such proposals, packaged with the usual "humanitarian" verbiage, mean a reinforcing of the same imperialist institutions that for decades have pursued military intervention, racist repression and attempts to turn North African states into EU border guards.

In 2006, Human Rights Watch denounced the Qaddafi government for carrying out arbitrary detentions and torture in prison camps for foreigners, three of which were funded by Italy. The Italian reformist left strongly criticized the Berlusconi government for bilateral agreements with Qaddafi's regime over policing immigration. They forgot to add that Berlusconi was enacting previous agreements that had been made in December 2007 by the second Prodi government, which included RC secretary Paolo Ferrero as a minister.

The capitalist government of Luis Zapatero's Socialist Party in Spain was no better. Overnight in late April 2008 outside Al Hoceima, Morocco, a Spanish naval vessel sank a boat carrying sub-Saharan immigrants, killing at least 29. The Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in Morocco are surrounded by a double fence of barbed wire nearly 20 feet high, partially paid for by the EU. During the summer of 2005, attempts by hundreds of men to cross the fences were repelled by gunfire from the Guardia Civil and their Moroccan auxiliaries that killed an estimated 13 and wounded 100 people.

Italian prime minister Letta now denounces the new Libyan authorities for not properly policing their shores. To be sure, this is not because the Libyan regime solidarizes with the plight of black African immigrants. The pro-imperialist puppet government that emerged from the NATO bombing campaign promised to maintain the existing agreements with Italy and the EU over the repression of immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa and their detention in desert prison camps.

AP

September 2011: Nigerian man arrested by imperialist-backed Libyan opposition forces. Rebel militias rounded up, tortured and killed black African immigrants.

Immediately after taking power, Libyan prime minister Mahmoud Jibril declared that he "welcomed and encouraged" his country's joint coastal patrols with Italy and blamed "illegal immigrants" for "spreading diseases and provoking clashes with Libyan citizens." In August 2011, "revolutionary" militias from Misurata carried out ethnic cleansing in the town of Tawergha, whose 30,000 villagers, mostly Libyan citizens descended from black slaves, were chased from their homes for allegedly supporting Qaddafi's government. Many fled toward the desert in central Libya. Thousands ended up in refugee camps near Tripoli, where they were constantly harassed by the militias. Such were the reactionary militias that the fake-Trotskyist Partito di Alternativa Comunista, Italian affiliate of the Morenoite International Workers League-Fourth International, prettified as "proletarian armed committees" and called upon to directly take power.

Workers Movement Must Oppose Racist Immigration Laws

The Letta government ghoulishly promised to grant Italian citizenship as well as state funerals to those who died in the Lampedusa shipwreck. A funeral ceremony was held in Agrigento, Sicily, in the presence of Italian and Eritrean authorities but without the coffins of the victims and in the absence of the survivors, who were prohibited from attending. Families of the refugees protested the exclusion and the threatening presence of officials from Eritrea, from where many of the refugees had escaped, while local anti-racist activists chased Interior Minister Angelino Alfano with shouts of "Bossi-Fini, murderer's law."

Italy has been run for two years by "national unity" governments supported by the capitalist Democratic Party and People of Freedom party, with the leaders of the main trade-union confederations playing along by refusing to wage any class struggle. Financial institutions and the EU masters have charged these governments with slashing welfare and cutting wages and pensions in order to repay loans to Italian and foreign banks. Austerity measures have severely hit the working class, especially the millions of immigrant workers. The racist oppression of immigrants in Italy is symbolized by the Bossi-Fini law. Among its provisions, the law links the issuance of residence permits to work contracts, making immigrant workers vulnerable to all sorts of blackmail by the bosses.

In the wake of the Lampedusa tragedy, sections of the PD and its allies in Left Ecology Freedom have demanded the abolition of the most offending sections of the Bossi-Fini law or even its entire abrogation. PD integration minister Cecile Kyenge, the first non-white minister in

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Spying...

(continued from page 1)

airport for almost nine hours supposedly to divest him of 58,000 NSA electronic documents. Earlier, the Government Communications Headquarters, the British equivalent of the NSA, had overseen the destruction of a copy of Snowden's files held at the offices of the *Guardian* newspaper. (Several other copies remain.)

American "Democracy": Capitalist Class Dictatorship

The U.S. capitalist class—in whose interests the spying is carried out—is concerned with the impact that the exposures might have on future dealings with their European counterparts. Most concerned are the giant information processors—Google, Yahoo et al.—who fear that the decline in business of late will only continue, as the bulk of them are known to have readily provided the NSA with access to their data. Google executive Eric Schmidt is attempting to bluff his way out of trouble by feigning outrage against the NSA data burglars.

Many Americans are given to self-exposure on the Net and accustomed to having their personal data looted by Google, Yahoo and the rest on the behalf of advertisers. But the massive scope of snooping has raised the temperature of an American populace increasingly disgusted with a Congress and a president that have done nothing to alleviate the ravages of the Great Recession.

Even as he tries to give the impression that he wants to rein in spying, Obama has been loath to acknowledge any wrongdoing. In fact, his administration has stated that there is no alternative to the bulk collection of data, offering only that the NSA could perhaps destroy the information it has stockpiled after three years instead of the current five—as a sop to those naive enough to believe that the data will ever be destroyed. When it matters to the bourgeoisie, however, Obama seems magically able to adjust the electronic surveillance machine, as witnessed by his recent assurance to Merkel that her cell phone was not currently bugged.

More retreats and apologies may lie ahead as the web of U.S. surveillance is further brought to light. There is some movement in Congress to modify sections of the Patriot Act, with a few politicians suggesting its repeal. Among the lawmakers expressing some dismay at the extent of snooping is Republican Jim Sensenbrenner, an author of the Patriot Act who now wants to put "reasonable limits" on it. The Freedom Act, the draft legislation that he has sponsored, is supported by a range of right-wing libertarians and civil-rights groups like the ACLU. It would be welcome if such efforts created some speed humps for the agents of U.S. imperialism. It would be foolish to believe that reforms will ever significantly impede the imperialists' spying on whomever they want whenever they want. In fact, rival legislation from Democratic senator Dianne Feinstein would simply provide a solid legal footing for across-the-board surveillance, explicitly authorizing the bulk collection of Americans' phone records.

Imperial War Museum

Shortly after October Revolution, Trotsky oversaw publication of secret documents of the former Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The NSA was founded in 1952 by secret order of Democratic president Harry Truman, mainly to spy on the Soviet Union during the Cold War. It greatly expanded during the late 1960s and early '70s, as the government targeted radicals, Vietnam antiwar activists and black militants. Recently revealed documents indicate that the NSA viewed its very own Operation Minaret program, under which it spied on everyone from Martin Luther King to Jane Fonda, as "disreputable if not outright illegal." This program complemented the FBI's COINTELPRO, which began as a spying operation on the Communist Party and later unleashed murderous repression against Black Panther militants. After the Watergate scandal in the early 1970s and under the impact of the social struggles of that period, some of this sordid history was made public through the investigation and hearings of the Senate's 1975-76 Church Committee.

Among the measures adopted to curb NSA/CIA spying following the Church hearings was the 1978 Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA). Sponsored by the liberal icon Democratic senator Ted Kennedy, this legislation set up a special secret court to vet requests for "national security" wiretaps. FISA, or some similar oversight body, is invoked in many of today's proposed NSA reforms. In reality, FISA has served as a doormat for the NSA on its way to securing warrants for its clandestine data raids. In its first 33 years, the court denied only eleven of nearly 34,000 wiretap applications! The annual statistics provided to Congress put the current application approval rate at over 99 percent.

The capitalist rulers, a tiny minority of the population who live off the labor of the working class, depend on lying, spying and violence to keep the majority of the population underfoot. Diplomatic skullduggery, which Obama in a rare moment of candor referred to as "how intelligence services operate," is a means to maneuver for influence, markets and cheap labor. When the working class took power in Russia after the 1917 October Revolution, the Bolsheviks who led the revolution published the secret World War I treaties concluded by the prior tsarist and Provisional Government regimes with their imperialist allies, exposing the war as a quest for plunder. With that stroke, the Bolsheviks demonstrated that they abandoned all hypocrisy and lies in addressing the workers of other nations, while continuing to employ all necessary subterfuge and deceit in dealings with the domestic and imperialist forces of counterrevolution.

In 1923-24, a parasitic bureaucracy headed by Stalin usurped political power from the Soviet proletariat (see article on page 2). The bureaucracy's police apparatus would be used to suppress all opponents of the regime, not only counterrevolutionaries but especially communist oppositionists, first and foremost the Trotskyists, who fought against the Stalinists' betrayal of the struggle for world socialist revolution. Meanwhile, the Kremlin's foreign spy service targeted the imperialists as well as, at times, working-class struggle in other countries, such as during the Spanish Civil War.

For their part, the U.S. and other imperialist countries built up armies of spies to serve the drive for capitalist restoration in the USSR. With the destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, the common enemy of the imperialists was removed. Subsequently, their clandestine operations were directed more to gaining advantage over one another, even as military and economic pressure has been kept on China and the other remaining deformed workers states.

Spying and treachery between states will persist until international proletarian revolution erases the basis for national antagonisms and sets the stage for the withering away of the state. After that, as Karl Marx's collaborator Friedrich Engels eloquently explained, "State interference in social relations becomes, in one domain after another, superfluous, and then dies out of itself; the government of persons is replaced by the administration of things, and by the conduct of processes of production" (*Anti-Dühring*, 1878). ■

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the history of the country, has suggested a law to make it easier for immigrants' children born in Italy to gain citizenship. In response, and for the simple fact that she is a black woman, Kyenge has been subjected to a wave of vile racist attacks by far-right Northern League scum and by outright fascist groups like Forza Nuova that have thrown bananas at her and hung nooses in a town where she was due to speak.

Up to now, Italian citizenship has been ruled by "ius sanguinis" (blood right), which grants automatic citizenship to anyone in the U.S., Argentina or elsewhere with a male ancestor who died as an Italian citizen after 1861, when the former kingdom was established. Beneficiaries also include anyone descended from Italians who lived in the territories of the former Yugoslavia that were occupied by fascist Italy. Changes proposed to the immigration laws are only cosmetic. They would maintain the system of detention centers while reducing maximum stays to less than the current 18 months and would make illegal immigration an administrative offense in order to avoid overfilling prisons and courts and to free police for patrolling the streets.

Two deputies from the populist Five Star movement introduced an amendment to abolish the crime of illegal immigration, which carried in a commission of the upper chamber of parliament. However, Five Star gurus Beppe Grillo and Gianroberto Casalegno issued a vile statement printed on Grillo's blog ranting that "the content of this amendment is an invitation to emigrants from Africa and from the Middle East to set sail for Italy.... Lampedusa is close to collapsing and Italy's not doing too well. How many clandestines can we welcome here if one in eight people here in Italy does not have the money to eat?"

The Lega Trotskista d'Italia, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), calls for the abolition of the Bossi-Fini law and for full citizenship rights for everyone who lives on Italian soil, with no restrictions whatsoever. We demand: Close the detention centers! No deportations! Calling simply for the abolition of the Bossi-Fini law has nothing to do with citizenship rights. If it were repealed, there would be a de facto reversion to the previous legislation, the Turco-Napolitano law. Enacted in 1998 under the Prodi government with votes from the RC, it provided the basic framework for all subsequent immigration laws: deportations, detention camps, administrative detention and deprivation of citizenship rights. The main difference has always been that popular-front governments couched their racist laws in "humanitarian" garb, while the right revels in the most open and vicious racism.

Both bourgeois forces have managed immigration in the interests of Italian capitalism, which needs a cheaper workforce that is easy to blackmail and dispose of in the event of economic downturns. The second Prodi coalition government, which included RC, never even talked about changing the Bossi-Fini law. "Left" bourgeois governments have certainly not shied away from using immigrants as scapegoats for growing misery. In 2007, the Prodi government launched a vicious campaign against Roma (gypsy) and Romanian immigrants in order to send the message that while they were EU citizens, they were not equals under the law or in practice.

Labor should take a stand in defense of immigrants and fight to unionize immigrant workers, who are savagely exploited by the *caporali* (overseers) in the fields of Southern Italy and by contractors in the North. This requires a class-struggle leadership of the trade unions to replace the current pro-capitalist union bureaucrats mostly linked to the PD and its reformist tails, whose aim is to be in the saddle of capitalist government. After a decade of Left Ecology Freedom rule in Puglia, the region remains a center of brutal exploitation of immigrant workers in agribusiness and "alternative energy" projects. To end discrimination and victimization of immigrants requires the proletarian overthrow of the capitalist system of exploitation, to which racist oppression is an integral component. ■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

"Fortress Europe" Means Racist Murder

Mass Drowning of Refugees in Mediterranean

The following article was written by our comrades of the Lega Trotskista d'Italia, section of the International Communist League.

On October 3, a boat carrying over 500 refugees, mainly from Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia, caught fire and capsized half a mile from the Italian island of Lampedusa. All told, 366 bodies were eventually recovered and more are still missing. Only 155 people survived. Those who were in the hold, overwhelmingly women and children, could not even try to escape. The body of a young mother was found attached to her newborn baby by the umbilical cord. This was the deadliest tragedy in the Mediterranean Sea since the end of World War II, with a toll exceeding the December 1996 drowning of at least 283 men, women and children, most of them from Pakistan, in the waters off Portopalo, Sicily.

The mass drowning off Lampedusa brought forth a combination of crocodile tears and racist cynicism from Italian capitalist politicians. Democratic Party (PD) prime minister Enrico Letta and Minister of Interior Angelino Alfano of Silvio Berlusconi's right-wing People of Freedom party, joined by European Union (EU) president José Manuel Barroso, went to Lampedusa to kneel before the coffins of the victims. In a staged farce, everybody from the government to the Catholic church to the Left Ecology Freedom parliamentary opposition got together to decry the disaster and swear, in the words of Letta, "Never again another Lampedusa."

But just eight days later on October 11, a second boat carrying at least 480 Syrian refugees (and reportedly 100 sub-Saharan immigrants locked in the hold) sank 60 miles south of Lampedusa, killing 268 people. The boat had been damaged by gunfire from a Libyan patrol boat, and individuals on board had been desperately phoning Italian authorities for help. These requests were turned down one after another. Told to contact the Maltese navy instead, they were left to die. A helicopter from Malta did not arrive until six hours after the first S.O.S., when the ship had already capsized.

Reuters

October 3: Bodies of drowned migrants in Lampedusa harbor after shipwreck of boat destined for Italy.

Those who died in Lampedusa were murdered, and the blame lies with the barrage of vicious anti-immigrant laws that have been imposed by Italian governments, whether left-of-center or right-of-center, and the EU. Meanwhile, the survivors are being held in the Center for Identification and Expulsion in Lampedusa, subject to criminal prosecution for "illegal" immigration. Over the last two decades, the southern rim of Europe has experienced a proliferation of racist laws, barbed-wire fences and detention camps, as well as armed forces deployed to guard the borders of "Fortress Europe." The number of immigrant detention camps along the southern and eastern borders of the EU went from 324 in 1999 to 473 in 2011, with 13 in Italy. These totals do not include the many unofficial detention centers, from ship cabins to police stations.

Reuters

Desperate immigrants locked up in refugee camp in Lampedusa, Italy, in July.

The bourgeois press and politicians initially blamed local fishermen for not rescuing the victims of the shipwreck, with some survivors stating that three fishing vessels had turned away from their burning boat. Later, some of the rescuers blamed the local naval authority, the Capitaneria di Porto. Vito Fiorino, who was sleeping on his boat the night of the accident and was the first to hear the desperate cries of the victims, told *Corriere della Sera* (5 October):

> "While we were trying with all of our forces to pull on board as many people as we could, the people on the vessel from the Capitaneria were taking pictures and videos.... We were putting refugees on board in groups of four. When our ship became too crowded and we risked sinking, we asked the Capitaneria to take them on board of their ship so we could go on with the rescue. Instead they told us they could not accept them because of protocol. It is incredible."

International maritime law compels ships, including military vessels, to respond to emergency calls from nearby ships and to rescue people if possible. In Italy, however, they need to first get authorization from maritime authorities to avoid being prosecuted under the provisions of a 2002 law pushed by Umberto Bossi and Gianfranco Fini, ultra-right ministers in the Berlusconi government. That law made "illegal" immigration a criminal offense.

Mediterranean: Open-Air Cemetery

In the past, merchant ships were ordered to transport refugees they had rescued to Malta or Libya, countries that are notorious for their mistreatment of immigrants in detention camps. This discouraged merchant vessels from responding to emergency calls. Fishing ships that had rescued immigrants have been seized by naval authorities who investigated the crews, leading to the loss of weeks of work during fishing season. Some crews were even prosecuted and jailed. In 2004, three workers for the refugee charity ship *Cap Anamur* were put on trial for rescuing 37 immigrants and taking them to an Italian harbor. In August 2007, seven Tunisian fishermen who had rescued 44 people from a sinking boat off Lampedusa were detained for 32 days. In September 2011, the Italian government declared Lampedusa harbor to be unsafe as a destination for refugees rescued at sea, compelling rescue operations to be moved to the Sicilian coast more than 100 miles further to the north.

Now the government and the EU are seizing on the deaths in Lampedusa to ramp up the racist policing of the Mediterranean even more. On October 14, the government announced the launch of operation "Mare Nostrum" (the Latin words used in the early 20th century by nationalist revanchists and fascists to describe their dream of an Italian empire around the Mediterranean). The

continued on page 10

WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 1035

29 November 2013

Obamacare Puts Squeeze on Working People

Patterson/NY Times

Corbis

Left: Family members in Mississippi numbering among the millions of uninsured not poor enough for Medicaid, but too poor for Obamacare subsidies. Right: Administration officials and insurance company executives with Obama at White House, November 15.

For Socialized Medicine—Quality Health Care for All!

News coverage of the botched rollout of President Obama's Affordable Care Act (ACA) initially focused on the government's virtually unusable Web site. But the headlines soon shifted to a bigger story: insurance companies canceling millions of families' policies. So far, some 4.8 million people who do not get coverage through their employers have received cancellation notices because their plans do not conform to the ACA. Many are being forced to accept policies that impose much higher premiums and out-of-pocket medical costs for inferior coverage.

Obama repeatedly promised: "If you like your health plan, you will be able to keep your health plan." In fact, the administration knew from the start that this was false. Though it was practically unreported in the press, the administration estimated as far back as June 2010 that up to two-thirds of privately purchased insurance policies would get canceled when the ACA was introduced. On November 7, Obama apologized to those losing their coverage despite "assurances they got from me." He insisted that the problem would impact only "about 5 percent of the population who are in what's called the individual market."

That new promise by the president is just as false as the previous one. A major component of Obamacare is the drive to scale back employer-paid health plans, which provide health insurance for 156 million people—more than half of the population. By the administration's own estimate, as many as 80 percent of small-employer plans and 64 percent of large-employer plans could be canceled as a result of the Affordable Care Act (*Federal Register*, 17 June 2010).

When working people got a measure of decent health coverage through employer-paid plans, it was the fruit of hard class struggle by this country's industrial unions. The years-long attack on those plans is reflected in the increasing medical costs that workers are obliged to pay. Since the financial crisis began six years ago, average family premiums have grown by over 25 percent. The efforts to water down employer-funded health plans are of a piece with the drive initiated under the Ronald Reagan presidency to replace defined-benefit pension plans with 401(k) accounts, to which the bosses make only minimal contributions.

In our previous article on Obamacare ("U.S. Rulers Intensify War on Workers, Poor," *WV* No. 1031, 4 October), we laid out several ways that the ACA further undermines company health plans. One key provision is the tax on so-called "Cadillac" plans, which actually comprise up to three-quarters of all employer-paid plans. An economist who helped draft the ACA called the tax "one of the most significant provisions" of the law (*New York Times*, 27 May). Companies—as well as local and state government agencies—are putting unions under intense pressure to accept whittled-down health benefits before the tax goes into effect in 2018.

The Obama administration has trumpeted the fact that, with the expansion of Medicaid, millions of currently uninsured poor people will have access to health insurance under the ACA. As is traditional in racist capitalist America, even that improvement is being denied to many black people and others on the bottom. Since the Supreme Court gave the green light, a total of 26 states—including every state of the former Confederacy except Arkansas—have rejected the expansion of Medicaid, which was supposed to help finance the extension of coverage to the poorest layers of society. Those states are home to more than two-thirds of the poor blacks and single mothers nationwide who lack insurance. A Mississippi doctor pointed to the legacy of segregation: "If you look at the history of Mississippi, politicians have used race to oppose minimum wage, Head Start, all these social programs. It's a tactic that appeals to people who would rather suffer themselves than see a black person benefit" (*New York Times*, 2 October).

The low-cost insurance plans obtainable under the ACA require such high out-of-pocket payments in the form of copayments and deductibles that many of those covered will still not be able to afford doctor's examinations or medical tests. In reality, these so-called "bronze" plans offer little more than catastrophic care insurance: If you run up major hospital bills, you will be much less likely to lose everything in bankruptcy than is now the case. In opposing the ACA from the outset, we noted that "Obama invokes the plight of the uninsured, with promises of a level of care not much above a pledge to pick up the dead bodies" ("For Socialized Medicine!" *WV* No. 943, 25 September 2009). With the population mandated to purchase coverage, the insurance companies expect to collect an additional annual bonanza of $60 billion.

Access to health care should be an elementary right for everyone, not just those who can pay for the highly advanced care that can be found in the U.S. The allocation of skilled personnel, medical facilities, equipment and medicines entails a cost to society. That cost should be borne not by individuals out of pocket but by the government. At the point of delivery of health care, the service should be free of charge. The U.S. government throws plenty of money—collected through taxes—at its police, prisons, army and other repressive state institutions to protect capitalist profits and rule. But it will take fierce class struggle for workers to win even a modicum of the quality health care everyone needs. This requires fighting the class-collaborationist outlook of the trade-union bureaucrats, who have acceded to countless givebacks in the service of capitalist profitability. The labor traitors went all out to help ensure passage of the ACA, whatever their current misgivings about the "reform."

Under the capitalist system, fully satisfying basic human necessities—including good education, decent housing and stable, well-paid jobs—inevitably runs up against the drive by corporations to generate profits. For the capitalist bosses of the U.S. insurance giants and pharmaceutical companies, health care is essentially a commodity trade in human lives. These parasites should be expropriated, a task that points straight to the need to overturn the capitalist order through socialist revolution. To achieve this goal requires forging a workers party that champions the cause of all the exploited and oppressed.

Socialism and Health Care

That the U.S. is the only major industrialized country in the world without a national health care program is, in large part, testimony to how successfully America's rulers have wielded anti-black racism and anti-immigrant nativism to divide and weaken the working class and its struggles. Those divisions have been a

continued on page 7

General Giap and the Vietnamese Victory Against Imperialism...4

Workers Vanguard Subscription Drive

New Readers for Revolutionary Press

The Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Clubs concluded our annual subscription drive on October 9. This year's campaign was modestly successful, exceeding our quota with 2,325.5 points. The total represented 1,035 subscriptions to *Workers Vanguard*, 81 to *Espartaco* (newspaper of the International Communist League's Mexican section) and 95 to the press of ICL sections in other countries. Unlike past years, the quota did not include an "at large" category, which had mainly consisted of *WV* subs sold by our comrades in Canada during their sub drive. Comrades reported that widening social inequality, the NSA spying revelations and recent racist atrocities were prominent factors in motivating new subscribers to our revolutionary Marxist press.

Comrades from the four SL/U.S. locals visited campuses and worksites far beyond their home turf, with some working alongside the Trotskyist League of Canada in Montreal. Helping kick off the sub drive, a sizable team of comrades traveled to Washington, D.C., for the August rally marking the 50th anniversary of the "March on Washington." Anger over George Zimmerman's acquittal for the racist killing of Trayvon Martin was still running hot, swelling the attendance. But the rally was expressly designed by Al Sharpton and other Democratic Party liberals to appeal to the Obama administration and its top cop Eric Holder for redress. Our banner calling, "Break with the Democrats! For a Workers Party!" had a polarizing effect, outraging some but attracting others to our literature offering a program for black liberation through socialist revolution.

WV Photo

Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth Club banner at August 24 commemoration of 1963 March on Washington.

As we have done for many years, we visited Mid-Atlantic, Southern, Gulf and West Coast ports, where the ILA and ILWU longshore unions are increasingly under siege from the shipping companies and terminal operators. Our Chicago local was encouraged by its results in Michigan. In addition to sales at the large state universities in Lansing and Ann Arbor, comrades did well in Detroit, a city that the auto barons and bankers have turned into a monument to capitalist decay. At Ford's River Rouge plant in Dearborn, where pensions, union protections and wages have all been on the chopping block, one worker held up our newspaper and announced: "I'm not a communist, but there's a lot of truth in this! Communists are pro-union all the way, and that's good enough for me!"

Locals reported that the SYC's "Meet the Marxists" presentations, a regular feature of our sub drives, sparked lively debate on everything from the shell game of capitalist electoral politics to petty-bourgeois environmentalism. Many student subscribers, overburdened with debt and facing scarce job prospects, said that socialism was attractive because to them it meant affordable education and health care.

In New York City, the SYC joined protests against the return of the U.S. military's ROTC program to City College after 40 years, as well as against the City University's appointment of war criminal David Petraeus as a visiting professor. In Durham, North Carolina, a Spartacist speaker addressing a protest against the threatened U.S. imperialist bombing of Syria pointed out that the reformist Workers World Party and other self-described socialists had hailed Obama's 2008 election and that the Democrats are the capitalists' preferred party of war. As Workers World supporters lamely insisted that Obama's ascension to Commander-in-Chief ***was*** a victory against racism and imperialism, several protesters were intrigued by our polemics and subscribed to *WV*.

WV is known for tackling the hard issues, such as defending China and North Korea's nuclear weapons capacity as a deterrent to imperialist attack. One particularly controversial article featured in the sub drive was "State-Branded 'Sex Offenders': Pariahs for Life" (*WV* No. 1030, 20 September).

Our Marxist press promotes an international perspective grounded in the history of the workers movement. The current issue of our theoretical journal *Spartacist*, which is included with all *WV* subscriptions, focuses on upholding the lessons of the Bolshevik-led October Revolution of 1917 against the attacks of social-democratic renegades from Marxism. While class and social struggle continue to be at a low ebb in the U.S., the very workings of the capitalist profit system generate enormous discontent. Swimming against the stream of bourgeois ideology is necessary to win those who want to fight against the depravities of capitalist imperialism to a revolutionary program. We welcome our new and returning readers. And we congratulate comrade Alan in the Bay Area for winning the national sub drive.■

TROTSKY

LENIN

Medicine in U.S. Capitalist Society

Writing in the mid 20th century, James P. Cannon, founder of American Trotskyism, pointed to the contradiction besetting doctors in the capitalist U.S. between the delivery of medicine as a social service and its rendering into a commodity for profit. As he observed elsewhere in the same article: "Socialism will be good medicine for the doctors who just want to be doctors."

Medicine as a science is progressive and revolutionary, constantly sharpening its theoretical tools, bold and thoroughgoing in its increasingly successful search for new techniques. Medical science is benign, by its very nature social-minded, humane and out-giving, committed to the most ennobling ideal—the service of others. Who can be more deserving of the grateful acclaim of the people than those who heal the sick and make human life more livable? The doctors—as doctors—belong to the Order of the Friends of Man.

But the way things are, the doctor, who shouldn't have to bother with anything but his profession, must also be a businessman who has to make a living, charge all the traffic will bear and try to get rich in competition with others. This side of the picture is not so attractive. Medicine as a business, self-centeredly working for its own pocket, is no better than any other business. In some respects it is even worse, for the unnatural mixing up of a profession designed for service with the business of making money entails a special corruption of its own, which merits nobody's veneration.

Commercialized medicine leads to discrimination against those who need medical service most in favor of those who can pay best....

The Oath of Hippocrates obligates the doctor to visit the sick wherever they may be and to serve anyone whatever, on the sole condition that he needs medical care.

That ideal of the legendary founder of the medical profession must govern its future too. But that can be fully realized only when the practice of medicine as a social service—its justification and its glory—is completely separated from sordid business considerations and shabby politics—its degradation and disgrace.

That will require a change and reorganization of our social system, as revolutionary as any changes that have been made in the practice of medicine.

—James P. Cannon, "The Doctor's Dilemma," *Militant*, June 1952, reprinted in *Notebook of an Agitator* (1958)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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Reinstate Fired School Bus Union Leaders!

Boston

Boston school bus drivers, organized in United Steel Workers (USW) Local 8751, are fighting a vendetta against union leaders for a brief job action last month provoked by labor-hating Veolia Transportation (see "Boston Job Action: No Reprisals Against School Bus Drivers!" *WV* No. 1033, 1 November). Since it took over management of the buses in June, the company had trampled on the union contract, threatening safety, shortchanging drivers on their paychecks and effectively forcing them to reapply for their jobs. When on October 8 drivers refused to roll out the buses unless management agreed to a meeting with the union, the bosses locked out the workforce for the day, bringing in police to help clear the yards. Veolia sought to make special examples of the "School Bus Union 5." Grievance committee chairman Stevan Kirschbaum, vice president Steve Gillis, recording secretary Andre Francois, stewards Garry Murchison and Richard Lynch were suspended. Except for Lynch, all were later fired.

Large numbers of the heavily Haitian and Cape Verdean drivers and their supporters mobilized for protests outside the disciplinary hearing for the School Bus Union 5 at the end of October. In response to the subsequent firings of the Local 8751 officials, some of whom have long been supported by the reformist Workers World Party (WWP), a day of solidarity was held on November 9. Hundreds of people, including trade unionists from other cities, rallied at the Freeport bus yard and marched to company headquarters, chanting "Union! Union!" Management, though, has thus far proved intransigent. Not one of the demands presented by the union right after the work stoppage, which the company deemed illegal, has been met. To help beat back this open union-busting, all of labor must stand behind the drivers. Reinstate Kirschbaum, Gillis, Francois and Murchison! An injury to one is an injury to all!

Fred Floreal

Suzuki/Boston Herald

Above: Garry Murchison, Stevan Kirschbaum, Andre Francois, Steven Gillis and Richard Lynch, the "School Bus Union 5." Below: November 9 union solidarity rally outside Veolia Transportation in Boston demands drivers be reinstated.

Although the USW regional office renounced the job action at the time, providing ammunition for Veolia, the union's top leadership has since stepped up to the plate to underwrite the defense effort. The San Francisco Labor Council and Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 1181 in New York City are among the union bodies that have issued solidarity statements, helping counter the redbaiting and union-bashing emanating from all quarters of the Boston elite. Such statements need to be turned into whatever actions are necessary to defeat the attack on Local 8751 by Veolia, an international outfit holding over 200 transportation contracts with cities, transit authorities and airports across North America. Wherever it sets up, this company's first order of business is to attempt to bring the unions to heel. Impressed by its anti-union record, other employers have paid top dollar for its services, such as Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART), which hired Veolia's Thomas Hock to squeeze its unions in contract negotiations earlier this year.

The attacks on the poorly paid school bus drivers are the latest in the nationwide anti-labor barrage. In NYC, school bus drivers and matrons in ATU Local 1181 carried out a month-long strike earlier this year after Mayor Michael Bloomberg sought to strip them of job protections, only to see 100 of the strikers fired upon returning to work. On the West Coast, BART union members went on strike twice in recent months in an attempt to fend off major concessions. Everywhere, workers are under pressure to keep surrendering hard-won gains of the past, even as the capitalist exploiters pocket ever greater profits.

A major barrier to reversing this course is labor officialdom's embrace of capitalist Democratic Party politicians. Unions nationwide contributed millions to help elect "friend of labor" Martin J. Walsh, the next mayor of Boston. But the reaction of this former head of the city's Building and Construction Trades Council to the October 8 job action was barely distinguishable from that of current Democratic mayor Thomas Menino. Not mincing words, Walsh declared: "This is illegal, the actions taken by the drivers. I don't condone it in any shape, manner, or form." According to the *Boston Globe* (8 October), Walsh "has continuously insisted that he would be able to oversee tough negotiations with unions despite their heavy contributions to his

continued on page 9

Letters

On Anti-Sex Witchhunts

28 September 2013

Dear Comrades,

I have just come across your excellent article in Workers' Vanguard ["Britain: Teacher Jailed in Anti-Sex Witchhunt," *WV* No. 1028, 9 August] reprinted from Workers' Hammer on the jailing of Jeremy Forrest, and I just want to send my applause and congratulations to your organization for being the only left group I know of nowadays that stands up for teenage and 'childhood' sexuality and also unconditionally speaks up for Julian Assange.

I have spent my life as a Reichian therapist fighting for people to free themselves sexually, and admire tremendously pioneers such as Wilhelm Reich and Alfred Kinsey who risked everything to try and bring some sense and honesty into the open about what everyone intrinsically knows: that from a very early age we all experience sexual curiosity and desires.

I left England in 1974 and don't know what the hell happened to turn the clock back so radically on all the development towards sexual freedom that was going on in the 60s and 70s, and I have been totally shocked at just how deeply the cancer of the new sexual puritanism has re-entrenched itself.

So it is with the utmost relief that I read your article and many others on similar issues such as 'Obama's Reactionary Crusade Against Teen Birth Control' in Workers' Vanguard of 31 May.

I admire the way you stick your neck out and take such a strong stand in these oppressive times.

I can't join you *in toto* as although brought up in a communist family, I removed myself from Western society many decades ago and live as a 'bourgeois peasant' running up a small commune and working the land on an organic farm in the Colombian Andes ...and using alternative medicine, which I see for some strange reason you are violently opposed to!

However, this doesn't stop me appreciating enormously your radical stance on so many issues.

Wishing you well,
Jenny J.

***WV* replies:**

We appreciate Jenny's letter. For those interested in reading about our opposition to alternative medicine, please see "On Quacks and Their Defenders," *WV* No. 962, 30 July 2010.

* * *

5 October 2013

Dear Spartacist League,

Thanks for your excellent article on the new pariahs of the American police state: sex offenders ["State-Branded 'Sex Offenders': Pariahs for Life," *WV* No. 1030, 20 September]. It is to your credit that among all left groups, you have been consistently superior in your coverage of the antisex witch hunt and sex panic that has branded so many with the scarlet letter for life. No other group comes close to your incisive and comprehensive coverage. Virtually all left groups instead run after the ruling class's phony "equality" campaigns (gay marriage, militarism, hate crimes laws...) that have served not only to co-opt gay liberation, but also contributed to the demise of the radical sexual freedom movement altogether. Too many who consider themselves radicals embrace the liberal "equality" mantra and, insofar as they even believe in sexual liberation, relegate it to the Wobbly pie in the sky by and by when you die.

The same criticism could be made of most "lgbt" groups, who, to their shame, have not made a peep to protest the government's inhuman mistreatment of those it brands as "sex offenders," some of them teenagers.

Kudos! Your work is appreciated.

David Thorstad

28th Annual PDC Holiday Appeal

Free the Class-War Prisoners!
Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!
Free Lynne Stewart!

CHICAGO
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3 to 7 p.m.
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37 S. Ashland (at Monroe)
Information: (312) 563-0442

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Sunday, December 15
4 to 8 p.m.
The Commons Brooklyn
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(B, Q, 2, 3, 4 or 5 Train to Atlantic Ave.-Barclays. A, C or G Train to Hoyt-Schermerhorn)
Information: (212) 406-4252

TORONTO
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Illustration by Dani

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AFP

Gamma-Rapho

Left: General Vo Nguyen Giap (back left) with Ho Chi Minh (second from right) in 1950 during military campaign against French imperialists. Right: Vietnamese forces in May 1954 en route to Dien Bien Phu, site of decisive defeat for French military.

General Giap and the Vietnamese Victory Against Imperialism

On October 12-13, hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese gathered all over the country to pay their respects to General Vo Nguyen Giap in two days of national mourning. Giap, who died on October 4 at the age of 102, was the chief architect of the defeat in Vietnam of two world powers: first France, which had colonized Vietnam in the mid 19th century, and then the U.S. The wars in Vietnam, which lasted 30 years (1946-75) and cost some three million lives, were part of the imperialist crusade to "roll back Communism," aimed at restoring capitalist rule in the Soviet Union and drowning in blood struggles for national liberation and social revolution by workers and peasants elsewhere.

A former history teacher and journalist, Giap was the top military commander of the Vietnamese army that decisively defeated the French at the battle of Dien Bien Phu in 1954. The victory of the Vietminh (Vietnam Independence League, a bloc led by Ho Chi Minh's Communists that included some bourgeois nationalists) resulted in the division of the country between a bureaucratically deformed workers state in the North and a capitalist regime in the South under U.S. imperialist domination. Dien Bien Phu gave tremendous encouragement to independence struggles in France's remaining colonies, in particular helping spark Algeria's national liberation struggle, which broke out later that year.

The U.S. would go to meet a stunning defeat at the hands of the North Vietnamese Army and the South Vietnamese National Liberation Front (NLF, or Viet Cong). The brutal, seemingly endless war would produce an explosive situation in the U.S., the heartland of world imperialism, and radicalize a whole generation of youth throughout the world. The spectacle of the massive American military machine losing to the workers and peasants of a poor Third World country inspired other oppressed peoples to fight for their own liberation. However, numerous attempts to replicate the peasant-based Chinese, Vietnamese and Cuban guerrilla movements failed, at the cost of the lives of many would-be revolutionaries.

The overthrow of capitalist rule in Vietnam was a historic victory for the international working class, whose duty is to defend such conquests tooth and nail against imperialism and domestic counterrevolution. This is despite the rule of a Stalinist regime that from the beginning has politically suppressed the working class and opposed the fight for workers revolution elsewhere. In contrast, the proletarian October Revolution of 1917 in Russia, under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party, established the rule of workers and peasants councils (soviets), and two years later the Communist (Third) International was launched in Moscow to promote the fight for world socialist revolution.

Giap was North Vietnam's defense minister in 1975, when Saigon fell to the North Vietnamese Army and NLF, leading to the reunification of North and South Vietnam. For years, U.S. imperialism's defeat in Vietnam constrained the American rulers in pursuing their bloody designs around the world. For his outstanding role in the liberation of Vietnam, we Trotskyists honor Vo Nguyen Giap, whose military genius and dedication will be remembered in history.

Stalinism and the Fight Against Imperialism

Vo Nguyen Giap joined Ho Chi Minh's Indochinese Communist Party (ICP) in the early 1930s. Building the Vietminh's military forces from scratch and later leading North Vietnam's conventional armed forces, he was praised as an outstanding military strategist, even by many of his enemies. Most famous for Dien Bien Phu, Giap was involved in many other key battles and was credited with creating the "Ho Chi Minh Trail," the crucial supply line for the NLF fighters in the South. He also organized the 1979 invasion of Cambodia, which toppled the demented Pol Pot regime. While details about Giap's early life are sketchy, it is clear that he paid a devastating personal price for his leadership of anti-imperialist struggle, with close relatives, including his wife, killed at the hands of the French.

Even while noting that Giap is often classed among the great military leaders of the 20th century, the *New York Times* (4 October) obituary harped on his supposed "profligate disregard for the lives of his soldiers," quoting war criminal General William C. Westmoreland's statement that "any American commander who took the same vast losses as General Giap would not have lasted three weeks." This is the sneering of the losers in Vietnam, the same imperialists who were willing to inflict any amount of death, destruction and suffering on those fighting for national and social liberation. General Giap waged revolutionary warfare: the workers and peasants who fought under his command were prepared for sacrifice to free themselves from the colonial yoke and the local landlords, oppressors and exploiters. "In the final analysis, victory in any war is determined by the willingness of the masses to shed blood on the battlefield," Giap once wrote.

In the starkest contrast, the heavily working-class American conscript troops were fighting a war on behalf of their own exploiters and oppressors. Especially as it became clear that the U.S. was losing, they increasingly opposed their own officers and government. When Muhammad Ali made his famous declaration, "No Vietcong ever called me n----r," he expressed the sentiments of growing numbers of soldiers, particularly black GIs who were aware that the "freedom" they were supposed to be fighting for in Vietnam was denied them at home.

But Giap's role was contradictory. The program of the ICP and its successors reflected the perversion of Marxism by the Stalinist bureaucratic caste that politically dominated the Soviet workers state beginning in 1923-24. In the vain hope of softening the imperialists' class hatred of the USSR, the bureaucratic regime abandoned the Bolshevik program of world revolution and adopted the dogma of "socialism in one country." The Communist International was increasingly transformed into an instrument of the bureaucracy's search for "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism.

In 1935, the popular front—the codification of the Stalinist policy of seeking alliances with "progressive" bourgeois forces—became the systematic practice of the Third International, leading to the betrayal of revolutionary opportunities throughout the world. As World War II loomed and the USSR faced the deadly menace of Nazi Germany, this policy meant selling the "democratic" credentials of one set of capitalist exploiters and imperialist oppressors (except for the brief period of what is known as the Stalin-Hitler pact). In the name of anti-fascism, Communist parties in countries militarily allied with the USSR became loyal supporters of the capitalist governments, backing their war aims against rival imperialists, opposing strikes and other struggles at home and opposing independence for their "own"

Bettmann

Da Nang, South Vietnam: U.S. marines haul NLF prisoners by neck harnesses, 1965.

colonies. In Vietnam at the time, this meant that the Communist Party did *not* challenge France's colonial stranglehold.

In WWII, Trotskyists called for working-class opposition to all the imperialist combatants, continuing to pursue the class struggle at home while fighting for unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union. In several colonial and semicolonial countries where the Communist parties repudiated the fight for national liberation, Trotskyists as a result gained significant influence in the proletariat. One such country was Vietnam, and this would put the Trotskyists in the crosshairs of not only the imperialists but the Stalinists as well.

Dien Bien Phu and the Geneva Accords

Toward the end of WWII, the Kremlin bureaucracy made a series of agreements with its U.S., British and other wartime imperialist allies, including over control of their colonies and semicolonies. Vietnam, which had been under Japanese occupation, was divided between North and South at the 16th parallel, the North awarded to Chiang Kai-shek's China and the South to Britain (and subsequently France). However, the Vietminh took over the North when Japan withdrew, and Ho Chi Minh proclaimed the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV). He then accepted the reintroduction of French troops in the North in the framework of limited independence within the "French Union." But once the French army came back in force, it turned on Ho Chi Minh's government. In November 1946, the French shelled Haiphong harbor, killing at least 6,000 Vietnamese.

The attack at Haiphong was met with a broad counteroffensive by the Vietminh, touching off a protracted war of liberation. At the end of 1953, the French military command decided to fortify Dien Bien Phu, a small village near the border with Laos. The intent was to create a secure base from which to harry Giap's Vietminh in the northwest mountains. The French built a formidable entrenched camp and brought in 16,000 troops, among them the Foreign Legion, its elite expeditionary corps. The surrounding forests and mountains were assumed to be impassable for the enemy's heavy artillery, which would in any case be vulnerable to air attack.

The Vietminh could access Dien Bien Phu only through a narrow, steep 55-mile-long mule path interrupted by scores of mountain streams. In a few months, they built dozens of bridges despite constant attack by French artillery as well as heavy rain and flooding. Thousands of sampans and countless convoys of mules and bicycles using rivers, streams, roads and trails moved 4.5 million tons of materiel. Artillery was moved up the steep path in sections, then reassembled.

By January 1954, 55,000 Vietminh troops were positioned in the hills overlooking the garrison, and on March 13 General Giap launched the attack with a massive artillery barrage. "We were all surprised...how the Viets have been able to find so many guns capable of producing an artillery assault of such power," wrote one of the survivors. What was intended as a display of colonial might turned into a bloody trap for the French. Wading in the mud and muck, hammered relentlessly by artillery, they lost 4,000 men by some estimates. After 55 days of fighting, crushed and humiliated, the French surrendered to the Vietnamese, ending nearly a century of France's domination of Indochina.

With the Western imperialists seeking a compromise, a conference took place in Geneva that year attended by the Soviet Union, the U.S., France, Britain and China, where capitalist rule had been smashed in 1949. Going into the conference, Communists controlled most of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. But when they left the conference, which redivided Vietnam at the 17th parallel, they controlled only North Vietnam. A U.S. official wrote: "Ironically the agreement written at Geneva benefited all parties except the winners.... Ho Chi Minh somehow was persuaded—apparently by a joint Sino-Soviet effort—to settle for half the country on the grounds that the other half would be his as soon as elections were held." Since 80 percent of the population in South Vietnam was thought to be in favor of independence, the imperialists saw to it that those elections never took place. But in the North, the capitalists were expropriated and a collectivized economy was introduced, although the working class was denied political power.

The Geneva conference was one of several times that the Vietminh, and later the DRV/NLF, gave away imminent victory at the bargaining table at the behest of Stalin and his successors as well as Mao Zedong's Chinese Stalinists. But while the North Vietnamese settled for "socialism" in half a country, the relentless persecution of their comrades in the South did not stop, particularly under the Ngo Dinh Diem regime. In 1956, the Stalinists began giving real support to the resistance struggle in South Vietnam.

While it was pretty easy for the Moscow and Beijing bureaucrats to sell out someone else's revolution, for the Hanoi Stalinists total sellout would have meant cutting their own throats. The Stalinists' political perspective was an alliance with the native capitalists, but this class was too weak to present a real possibility for power-sharing. Under attack by imperialism and with their own bourgeoisie rebuffing all offers of a coalition, they were forced to rely on the workers and peasants, sometimes acquiescing to revolutionary measures. Thus, the Vietnamese war posed a social revolution from the beginning, with the workers and peasants on one side and the domestic bourgeoisie and the imperialists on the other.

U.S. Sent Packing

After the French departure, the U.S. took over the campaign to crush the Vietnamese Revolution. When the resistance struggle by the NLF picked up once

continued on page 6

WV Photo

Spartacist League at 1973 anti-Vietnam War protest in Washington, D.C.

RULERS INVADE CAMBODIA, MASSACRE U.S. STUDENTS:

Blood and Nixon

1970 Spartacist Leaflet

The Nixon administration's criminal adventurist imperialist aggression into Cambodia and the new brutal bombings of North Vietnam are a final outrage in America's war against the just struggle of the Vietnamese working people for the liberation of their country. The slaughter at Kent State University in Ohio is a declaration of war upon students as the most outspoken dissenters against American foreign policy. This outrage shows that when provoked, the Administration will treat those at home who would oppose its imperialist aggression with the same callous brutality as it has shown the Vietnamese. The reality of the violence of American capitalism abroad and in the ghettoes at home has been harshly and dramatically brought home to all students.

This violence does not come from the evil or mistaken notions of a few politicians, as the liberals would have us believe—rather it is a violence politically motivated, directed against political dissent—it is the violence of capitalism which feels its power is threatened. For many students have begun to realize that the war in Vietnam is no "mistake" in U.S. foreign policy but is part of the need of American capitalism, as the backbone of world imperialism, to prevent social revolutions throughout the world.

The Working Class Must Lead the Struggle!

The Spartacist League has long insisted on the need for labor strikes against the war. We have raised the demand for a general anti-war strike of workers and students, and have struggled to see this demand adopted within the labor and radical student movements. It is crucial now for the masses of students to seek to link up their strike with workers, and it is crucial now for rank and file militants to raise the anti-war strike demand in their unions!

The reason for this should be clear. American capitalism's life blood is the profits made by exploiting the labor of the working class. This was sharply dramatized in the recent brief postal strike which severely threatened the economy's stability and forced Nixon to resort to troops to demoralize the strikers and intimidate popular support. Economic power lies in the hands of industrial, transportation and communications workers. And in the final analysis economic power is political power.

The student movement, isolated from the working class, will either shatter into frustrated, demoralized and adventuristic fragments and, like the [Black] Panthers, face savage repression by a government which feels it can attack them with impunity. The deepening political radicalization of students can be clearly seen in the cogent demands raised in many of the university strikes—demands for the freeing of all political prisoners, an end to war research and ROTC on campus, and an end to political intimidation, along with the demand for the immediate unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. troops and "advisers" from Southeast Asia.

Only the working class, because of its economic power, can lead an effective anti-war struggle. Only the class-conscious workers can lead the struggle to defeat capitalism. The unprecedented national student strike now under way is extremely important. The students' unity and militancy themselves pose a threat to the Administration, but it is its potential for sparking the working class into revolutionary motion (as happened in France in May 1968) which is its greatest importance.

Workers whose job conditions and falling real wages force them continually into conflict with the bosses must see as essential to their own interests the fight to end the bosses' imperialist war and to break from the bosses' warmonger political parties to form a party of labor. These struggles—like struggles for militant economic demands—will necessitate the replacement of the treacherous union bureaucracies which seek at every turn to tie the workers to the status quo (like "labor statesman" George Meany [head of the AFL-CIO], who completely endorses Nixon's war policy, and his more devious, left-talking counterparts like [United Automobile Workers leader Walter] Reuther) by rank and file workers' control. A working class which joins the political combativeness of the radical student protesters with their own tremendous militancy is the only force which can decisively defeat the imperialists.

Sino-Soviet Sellout

Faced with the U.S. invasion of Cambodia, the Soviet Union and China satisfied themselves with a few threats to increase their half-hearted military aid to the NLF [National Liberation Front] forces. Where, we ask, is the massive military support to repel the vicious imperialist aggressor in Indochina? Why instead have the Russians sent enormous military aid to the corrupt incompetent capitalist government of Egypt? The Maoist rush to hail Sihanouk, [Cambodia's] former "neutralist" liberal prince, betrays the anxiety to avoid the urgent demands of the Indochinese situation and return to petty border quarrels and "national priorities." The North Vietnamese government's cowardly and vague threats about postponing negotiations in Paris also show their hypocrisy as Communist "internationalists." In face of the invasion into Cambodia and renewed bombings of the North, what possible excuse could be found for remaining in Paris to negotiate?

All the Stalinist leaderships have once again demonstrated that their primary concerns are with their own narrow needs in consolidating their own power. The Stalinist dictum of "socialism in one country" is seeing another tragic enactment. The gains of the anti-capitalist revolutions of Russia, China, etc. can be safeguarded not by diplomatic maneuvering and deals but only by the victory of the Indochinese Revolution and the destruction of capitalism in the advanced industrial nations—the U.S., Western Europe, Japan—whose economic and military capacities hold the key to world socialism and world peace. By their denial of a truly proletarian internationalist perspective, the Stalinist bureaucracies show themselves as a best friend to the bloody Nixon administration.

ALL INDOCHINA
MUST GO COMMUNIST!

FOR A LABOR-STUDENT GENERAL
STRIKE AGAINST THE WAR!

Giap...

(continued from page 5)

again, President John F. Kennedy turned to covert operations, sending special ops forces (50,000 "advisers") to South Vietnam. The CIA initiated the Phoenix program of infiltration, torture and assassination.

In February 1965, hoping to force North Vietnam to restrain the NLF, the Lyndon B. Johnson administration launched a full-scale war. Washington unleashed a massive bombing campaign over North Vietnam that lasted three years while massively increasing the number of U.S. troops in the South. At the height of the war, the U.S. had half a million combat troops in Vietnam and another 300,000 in the surrounding region. Over the war's course, the U.S. dropped more bomb tonnage than the combined total of all combatants in World War II. All told, the U.S. killed at least two million Vietnamese, maiming and wounding millions more and devastating most of the countryside.

To break the will of the American government to continue fighting, on 31 January 1968 the North Vietnamese and the NLF launched the Tet Offensive, a coordinated series of fierce attacks by some 80,000 men and women on more than 100 cities and towns in South Vietnam. Though U.S. and South Vietnamese puppet forces managed to hold off the attacks, Tet demonstrated the determination of the DRV/NLF fighters and further sapped the morale of their foes.

As it sank in that Vietnam had become a losing war, the U.S. sought negotiations. Peace accords were signed in 1973 in Paris, ending direct U.S. involvement in the war but keeping South Vietnam under imperialist bondage. The formal program of the Stalinists continued to be for a Southern coalition government with bourgeois forces. But unlike the situation resulting from the 1954 sellout, large numbers of DRV/NLF troops remained in the South, and the civil war went on for two more years. Finally, in early 1975 the government of North Vietnam carried out the "Great Spring Offensive" to liberate the South. Giap oversaw the final push on Saigon, and on April 30 DRV and NLF tanks rolled triumphantly into the South Vietnamese capital. Leaders of the defeated puppet regime and the South Vietnamese bourgeoisie fled by every available means; helicopters airlifted the last Americans out of the country.

Stalinism and Trotskyism in Vietnam

As noted above, agreements between the Allied imperialists and the Kremlin bureaucracy at the end of WWII dictated that South Vietnam would be returned to the French. But reimposition of Western colonial rule was resisted by the Trotskyists, who had acquired a mass working-class base, as well as by various nationalists. When the British and the French reoccupied Saigon in September 1945, an insurrection broke out. As people's committees sprang up, particularly around Saigon, the peasants in the countryside rose up, burning the villas of large landowners. The Trotskyists called for the people's committees to take power, for arming the people and for nationalization of industry under workers' control. (For more, see the 1976 Spartacist pamphlet *Stalinism and Trotskyism in Vietnam*.)

This program was a threat to the Stalinists' aim of accommodation with the bourgeoisie. As Nguyen Van Tao, the Vietminh's interior minister for the South at the time, declared: "Whoever encourages the peasants to take over the landed properties will be severely and pitilessly punished.... We have not yet carried out a communist revolution, which would bring a solution to the agrarian problem. This government is only a democratic government, and therefore it cannot undertake this task."

Nguyen Khanh Hoi, Quatrième Internationale (inset)

Trotskyists led 1945 Saigon workers insurrection, sparked by return of colonial forces. Stalinists welcomed "democratic" imperialists, assassinated Trotskyist leaders, such as Ta Thu Thau (inset).

The best-known Trotskyist leader, Ta Thu Thau, was arrested on the orders of the Vietminh. Tried three times by people's committees, he was acquitted each time. Finally, he was shot on the orders of southern Stalinist leader Tran Van Giau. As the French reinvaded the South in October 1945, the Stalinists stood by, concentrating their fire on the Trotskyists, whose leaders were all killed. Shortly thereafter, the Vietminh were forced out of Saigon by the Allies. Once Ho Chi Minh had physically liquidated the Trotskyist leadership with the aid of Giap, then the North's interior minister, he capitulated to the Allies in the North.

In this conflict the French Communist Party, which had several ministerial posts in the capitalist government in Paris, illustrated the lengths to which the Stalinists would go in attempting to ingratiate themselves with the bourgeoisie. While Ho Chi Minh was dissolving the Indochinese Communist Party and agreeing to permit French troops into the North, his French comrades were busy explaining why the right of national self-determination did *not* apply to Vietnam and voting war credits to finance the French expeditionary force! On 20 December 1946, a month after the French bombed Haiphong, Communist deputies in the French Assembly voted to send congratulations to the Expeditionary Corps and its lead executioner, General Leclerc.

The Vietnamese Communists were caught between their program of seeking to share power with the bourgeoisie—in accordance with the Stalinist schema of "two-stage revolution"—and the needs of their own survival, which ultimately meant a struggle to the end *against* the imperialists and the national bourgeoisie. As Leon Trotsky explained in developing the theory of permanent revolution, in the imperialist epoch the weak bourgeoisies of economically backward countries, closely intertwined with imperialism and mortally afraid of the worker and peasant masses, are incapable of carrying out the democratic tasks of national liberation and agrarian revolution. Those tasks can be achieved only through smashing bourgeois rule and establishing a proletarian dictatorship supported by the poor peasantry.

Despite their official program, the Vietnamese Stalinists, like Mao's forces in China, were compelled to take power in their own name and, either immediately or in the short term, break rotted-out bourgeois rule. The fact that those petty-bourgeois guerrilla movements could carry out social revolutions was conditioned by highly exceptional historic circumstances, including the extreme weakness of the working class as a contender for power and the counterweight to imperialism provided by the Soviet Union. Against ostensible Trotskyists and other leftists who saw these guerrilla movements as a substitute for mobilizing the proletariat in revolutionary struggle, the Spartacist League has always insisted that the most that these forces could achieve, under extraordinarily favorable conditions, was the creation of deformed workers states.

As we wrote in hailing U.S. imperialism's defeat in Indochina ("Capitalist Class Rule Smashed in Vietnam, Cambodia!" *WV* No. 68, 9 May 1975): "Because their rule is based on the political expropriation of the working class, these petty-bourgeois bureaucratic castes are incapable of mobilizing the proletarian masses for an international revolutionary assault on the bastions of world capitalism, since it would simultaneously mean their own demise." The nationalist Stalinist regimes from Havana to Hanoi and Beijing must be overthrown by workers political revolutions led by Trotskyist parties in order to open the road to socialist development.

America: The War Comes Home

Throughout the U.S. war in Vietnam and the mass antiwar protests, the Spartacist League called for unconditional defense of North Vietnam and for military victory to the NLF in the South while giving no political support to the Stalinist leadership. Our slogan "Victory to the Vietnamese Revolution!" expressed our understanding of the class nature of the war. While our slogans were attractive to many young people in this period of leftward motion, we had to swim against the stream, combating the false ideologies popular among the more radical activists, particularly Maoism and the adulation of Ho Chi Minh. We opposed antiwar rallies being made into platforms for bourgeois politicians, stressing that imperialist war is inherent in the capitalist system and can be fought effectively only on the basis of a revolutionary socialist program.

In early propaganda, we criticized the bureaucratic regimes in the USSR and China for their inadequate military aid to the Vietnamese and demanded: "Soviet nuclear shield must cover China, North Vietnam!" We denounced the Sino-Soviet split—a falling-out driven by the competing national interests of the two regimes—and called for Communist unity against imperialism. In response to the U.S. invasion of Cambodia in 1970, the SL raised the call, "All Indochina Must Go Communist!"

The U.S. Army was seething with discontent, while those back home were becoming increasingly alienated from the war, its Cold War rationale and economic costs, as well as from the lying government. Although the AFL-CIO labor bureaucracy headed by George Meany remained a bastion of support for the government until the end, the war was mostly unpopular among workers, and all the more so as it became widely perceived as an endless quagmire. Students were becoming radicalized as the Democratic Johnson administration escalated the military engagement. Many activists were breaking away from the official antiwar leadership of liberal pacifists and such reformist leftists as the Communist Party (CP) and Socialist Workers Party (SWP), who did donkey work for Democratic Party "doves" preaching about the need for negotiations and saving America's image.

The Vietnam antiwar movement arose on the heels of the mass, plebeian civil rights struggles that had punctured the smug political climate of 1950s anti-Communism. By the late 1960s, the antiwar protests coincided with an upturn in strikes as well as explosions of anger in the urban ghettos over police brutality, segregation and poverty. Despite the students' petty-bourgeois elitism and the best efforts of the racist AFL-CIO Cold Warriors, soldiers and young workers were open to radical arguments.

A Spartacist leaflet widely distributed at one of the massive marches on Washington ("From Protest to Power," 21 October 1967) noted that "the anti-war movement can force Johnson to withdraw U.S. troops only if he is more afraid of it than of the victory of the Vietnamese Revolution. No demonstration, however effective and militant, can do this. Only a movement capable of taking state power can. The anti-war movement has no future except as a force for building a party of revolutionary change." The leaflet called on militants to break out of the student milieu and orient to the proletariat. This would mean ceasing to build support for strikebreaking "antiwar" capitalist politicians and sellout black leaders like Martin Luther King, who backed the suppression of ghetto upheavals.

The Spartacist League opposed draft resistance and college student deferments, an example of class privilege that also had the effect of keeping antiwar students from impacting the views of working-class draftees. We called for mobilizing a one-day general strike against the war and for a labor party built through linking discontent over the war to the rising labor militancy and the explosiveness of the ghettos, charting a course for fighting against the entire capitalist system. The SL gained a hearing for these views and recruited substantially from the antiwar movement and New Left. But the official, pro-Democratic Party leaders (with the assistance of the CP and SWP) kept most of those who hated the war within the framework of social-patriotic, pro-imperialist politics.

A more far-sighted wing of the establishment was becoming defeatist from their own class standpoint: they had ceased to believe the U.S. could win in Vietnam and were increasingly alarmed at the war's social consequences. They especially feared that the Army was being destroyed as an effective fighting force, rife with drug addiction and with rank-and-file soldiers often more hostile to their officers than to the "enemy." Opening the road to bourgeois defeatism over Vietnam were the events in Indonesia in 1965, when the "progressive" Sukarno regime was toppled by a reactionary coup instigated by the CIA. The coup ushered in the massacre of over a million Commu-

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Obamacare...

(continued from page 1)

major roadblock to the development of elementary class consciousness—that is, the understanding that the multiracial proletariat has distinct class interests that require political expression in its own party. In Europe, the rise of mass workers parties beginning in the late 19th century went side by side with the introduction of national health care.

Europe's first compulsory social health insurance program was introduced in Germany by Chancellor Otto von Bismarck. A major concern of the "Iron Chancellor" and his advisers was to avoid any repeat in Germany of the 1871 Paris Commune, when the French workers briefly seized power during the Franco-Prussian War. In 1883, shortly after passing the Anti-Socialism Laws to squash the German Social Democratic Party, Bismarck introduced the Health Insurance Act. Bismarck declared that government policy "cannot be expressed simply by the repression of Social Democratic excesses, but that this must be accompanied by the positive enhancement of the workers" (Vicente Navarro, "Why Some Countries Have National Health Insurance, Others Have National Health Services, and the U.S. Has Neither," *Social Science and Medicine*, 1989).

Insurance plans soon spread to Austria (1888), Hungary (1891), Luxembourg (1901), Norway (1909) and Serbia (1910) after social-democratic parties had been established in most of those countries. In Russia, where the tsarist regime had survived workers revolution in 1905, state insurance was introduced in 1912 during a period of explosive strike battles and spreading influence of the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. The outbreak of World War I split the workers movement between the social-democratic parties that supported the war effort of their own capitalist ruling classes and revolutionary elements and organizations, prominently including the Bolsheviks, that opposed all sides in this interimperialist conflict.

In October 1917, the Bolsheviks led the working class in seizing state power. As reported in John Reed's *Ten Days That Shook the World* (1919), one of the Soviet government's early decrees, issued months before the expropriation of capitalist industry, declared:

> "The Workers' and Peasants' Government, relying upon the support of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, announces to the working-class of Russia and to the town and village poor, that it will immediately prepare laws on Social Insurance based on the formulas proposed by the Labour organisations:
> "1. Insurance for all wage-workers without exception, as well as for all urban and rural poor.
> "2. Insurance to cover all categories of loss of working capacity, such as illness, infirmities, old age, childbirth, widowhood, orphanage, and unemployment.
> "3. All the costs of insurance to be charged to employers.
> "4. Compensation of at least full wages in all loss of working capacity and unemployment.
> "5. Complete workers' self-government of all Insurance institutions."

The subsequent development of a collectivized, planned economy assured access to health care for all. This gain remained despite the degeneration of the October Revolution under the rule of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Workers in the Soviet Union had guaranteed health care, housing and jobs up until the workers state was destroyed through capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92. The value of the collectivized economy can be seen today in the Cuban deformed workers state, where despite an imperialist embargo and limited resources, health care outshines in many respects what is generally available in the U.S.

ZUMA Press

Los Angeles, April 16: Union rally of thousands, including public health workers, demands higher wages and statewide Medicaid expansion.

Nationalized health systems introduced in capitalist West Europe following World War II were themselves a response to the appeal the Soviet Union held for militant workers. The USSR, and by extension the mass Communist parties in capitalist Europe, gained enormous authority for having borne the brunt of the fighting to defeat the Nazi armies. As a wave of working-class militancy swept the continent, the capitalist rulers were willing to surrender a portion of their profits and grant social benefits in order to contain the powerful workers movements and prevent them from going further in a revolutionary direction.

In Britain, the Labour Party government under Clement Attlee instituted the National Health Service (NHS) in 1948. Even at its best, the NHS did not provide adequate care for the needs of the population. But the legal obligation for the state to provide universal health care, free to everyone at the point of delivery, was one of the most significant gains ever won by working people from British capitalism. Attempts by the British bourgeoisie to roll back that gain by privatizing health care repeatedly ran up against massive popular opposition. It was the Labour government of Tony Blair, using plans hatched in the 1980s under Conservative prime minister Margaret Thatcher, that succeeded in introducing the first significant measures opening the NHS to the penetration of private capital and the generation of corporate profits. That set the stage for the substantial shift of medical care toward the private sector under current Conservative prime minister David Cameron (see "Britain: Nationalized Health Care Under Attack," *WV* No. 1023, 3 May).

Class, Race and American Medicine

In the U.S., the campaign in the early 20th century for government-organized health insurance was spearheaded by the bourgeois Progressives. The high point of the Progressive Era was the presidential election of 1912, when the Progressives bolted from the Republican Party and nominated former president Theodore Roosevelt. Roosevelt supported government health insurance on the basis that no country could lord it over other nations if its people were in poor health, i.e., the rank and file of the armed forces had to be in shape to project U.S. military might around the world.

Nevertheless, the campaign for state insurance was defeated by an alliance of capitalists seeking to lower wages and benefits, insurance companies reaping cash from insecurity and fear, pharmaceutical companies hungering for profits and doctors in the American Medical Association (AMA) defending their incomes and social status. Lacking their own class party, workers were led by the likes of American Federation of Labor president Samuel Gompers, who denounced compulsory health insurance. This stalwart of U.S. capitalism (who also opposed legislation for the eight-hour day, the minimum wage and unemployment insurance) hypocritically intoned that government-paid health care would stand in the way of the workers struggling "for their own emancipation through their own efforts"!

In the 1930s, the issue of state-sponsored health insurance arose again in response to the working-class upsurge that led to the creation of the mass, integrated industrial unions of the CIO. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt sought to head off class struggle and the deepening leftist political radicalization by proposing a New Deal of palliative reforms. The racist Dixiecrats, who controlled the Democratic Party in the South and had a stranglehold in Congress, imposed a veto on any government intrusion in the health care system because they feared that it could ultimately threaten Jim Crow segregation of Southern hospitals and other health care services. The Dixiecrats did not block FDR's social security program, though they insisted that the mostly black agricultural and domestic workforce be excluded from its benefits. However, national health insurance did not survive the final draft of the 1935 Social Security Act.

The sharp class battles in the 1930s created an opening to form an independent workers party in the U.S. But that potential was stymied by the Communist Party and social democrats who used their influence in the CIO unions to help channel the workers' upsurge into support for FDR's Democratic Party. The working class has paid for this class-collaborationist alliance ever since.

Following World War II, a massive strike wave broke out. When the United Mine Workers (UMW) walked off the job in 1946 demanding employer-funded health care benefits, Democratic president Harry Truman seized the mines and ordered striking miners back to work. They refused. The nationwide strike ended when Truman agreed to endorse the miners' demand for lifetime health benefits. In 1947, Congress passed the slave-labor Taft-Hartley law, which specifically forbade company-funded welfare plans directly controlled by the unions. When the miners struck again in 1950 in defiance of government threats, they won an unprecedented cradle-to-grave union-controlled health plan. Miners paid a big price for their victory: UMW head John L. Lewis made a deal with the coal bosses not to protest the loss of thousands of jobs to mechanization. Nevertheless, the miners opened

continued on page 8

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nists, workers, peasants and ethnic Chinese. With the world's largest non-ruling Communist Party utterly destroyed, elements in the U.S. ruling class could more easily talk about cutting their losses in Vietnam.

Vietnam Was a Victory!

For years, many self-described socialists and ex-radicals nostalgic for the massive demonstrations of the Vietnam War era have peddled the myth that the antiwar movement ended the war. But it was the heroism and tenacity of the Vietnamese on the battlefield that broke the imperialists' will and drove them out of the country.

Today Vietnam, a country still scarred by pitiless bombing and devastating defoliation, continues to be squeezed by the far more powerful economies of the imperialists and by their massive military might. The diplomatic rapprochement of the Vietnamese Stalinists with the U.S. over the past decade reflects the country's isolation following the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, the continuing pressures of poverty and the nationalist antipathy pitting the Beijing and Hanoi bureaucracies against each other (see "Stirring Up the South China Sea—U.S. Imperialism Tightens Military Vise on China," *WV* No. 1005, 6 July 2012). The Stalinist regime has also spurred widening social inequality stemming from its version of "market socialism."

It remains the duty of revolutionaries in the belly of the imperialist beast to unconditionally defend Vietnam and the other remaining deformed workers states—China, Cuba, North Korea and Laos—against imperialist and domestic counterrevolutionary forces. The struggle for workers political revolutions to sweep away the Stalinist regimes in those countries is inseparable from the fight to mobilize the proletariat to overthrow capitalist rule in North America, Japan and West Europe—the prerequisite for building a world socialist society of material abundance. This requires the construction of Leninist-Trotskyist revolutionary parties.

When the U.S. launched air attacks against North Vietnam on 7 February 1965, we sent a telegram to Ho Chi Minh, stating: "Spartacist in fullest solidarity with defense of your country against attack by United States imperialism. Heroic struggle of Vietnamese working people furthers the American revolution." When the workers of this country take power from the murderous rulers of decaying capitalism, they will surely tear down the monuments to the imperialist war criminals (and Confederate generals) and erect in their place memorials to Vo Nguyen Giap and others who fought to rid this planet of exploitation and oppression. ■

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Roma...

(continued from page 12)

life is associated with the Roma.

The expressed concern of the Greek state for the welfare of Maria is breathtaking hypocrisy. In September, a prosecutor in Greece called to reopen an investigation into the disappearance of *over 500* Albanian Roma children who had been in the state's "care." The government rounded up these children in the years prior to the 2004 Athens Olympics in the guise of a campaign to protect children begging on the streets. The children disappeared and their whereabouts remain unknown. As for Maria, she has been wrenched from the family that raised her and is reportedly to be deported to Bulgaria, not to live with her biological parents but to be put in foster care.

One factor currently driving the hysteria against the Roma is related to the expansion of the imperialist European Union (EU). When Romania and Bulgaria, which both have significant Roma minorities, joined the EU in 2007, their citizens were restricted from working in several EU countries, including Britain, France and Germany. Restrictions on the right to work and the persecution and deportations of Roma show the true face of the European imperialist "democracies." On 1 January 2014, these restrictions will be lifted, putting an end to this formal discrimination in employment. However, even when Roma have the legal right to work, they will continue to face acute obstacles to getting work.

We in the International Communist League have always been implacably opposed to the EU, an imperialist trade bloc within which the major European imperialists cooperate to further the exploitation and immiseration of the working class, including its immigrant component. Within the EU, Germany, France and Britain dominate the poorer member states. The "second tier" includes East European countries used as a source of cheap labor and markets by the EU powers.

Canal+ (inset), Reuters

Paris, October 17: High school students protest deportations of Dibrani and Khatchik Kachatryan, a 19-year-old student of Armenian descent (inset).

In Britain, there is a furor over the supposed influx of Bulgarian and Romanian immigrants to descend on the country next year. During the summer, a Roma camp near London was cleared out and nearly all the residents were deported to Romania. Former Labour Party home secretary David Blunkett chided the current government for not being harsh enough on immigrant Roma, stating in a radio interview earlier this month: "We have got to change the behavior and the culture of the incoming community, the Roma community, because there's going to be an explosion otherwise." Such incitement gives legitimacy to fascist and state-backed terror.

In France, the government of Socialist Party president François Hollande (which includes Green Party housing minister Cécile Duflot) evicted over 10,000 Roma in the first six months of this year alone. Despite attempts to sound less racist, the reformist Communist Party's mayor of Saint Ouen, near Paris, wrote to Interior Minister Manuel Valls at the end of October demanding that Roma be expelled from a camp in her jurisdiction. Fueled by the government's anti-immigrant crackdown, fascist gangs have been assaulting veiled women and in June skinheads murdered leftist anti-fascist activist Clément Méric. Meanwhile, electoral support to the fascist National Front is growing.

As our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyste de France explained in "SP-Green Government's Racist Campaigns Swell Fascists' Sails" (*Le Bolchévik* No. 205, September 2013): "Racist terror is inherent in the capitalist system, whether it is fascist terror or the ordinary terror of the bourgeois state, whether it is Sarkozy's rightist government terror or Valls-Duflot's 'left' version, whether it targets Roma, veiled women or minority youth more generally. To do away with racist oppression once and for all, it is necessary to destroy its causes, which are found in the basic mechanisms of the system of capitalist exploitation."

We print below a translation of an October 29 leaflet issued by our comrades in France protesting racist deportations and demanding full citizenship rights for all immigrants.

* * *

In the presidential election last year, we called for people not to vote for Hollande. Among other things, we pointed to his vowing to wage an "implacable" struggle against undocumented immigrants and to put the Roma in "encampments of our own choosing" to stop them from moving around "over and over" (*Le Monde*, 15 February 2012). His chief cop minister, Valls, was only following through on these campaign promises when on October 9 he sent the cops onto a school bus looking for Leonarda Dibrani and had her deported for good to Kosovo. She speaks neither Albanian nor Serbian—but she does speak French! Leonarda courageously denounced Hollande's proposal to let her back into France...without her family.

The lesson Valls draws from this incident is that the processing of asylum requests must be accelerated, for the explicit purpose of being able to deport

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Obamacare...

(continued from page 7)

the way for the United Auto Workers and other unions to win health benefits, helping lay the basis for the employer-funded health plans that today are under attack.

While the bourgeoisie's ongoing class battle with the miners was playing out, Truman's platform for the 1948 presidential election included a proposal for national health insurance. Truman's electoral promises soon foundered in the sweeping tide of anti-Communist witchhunting, as the AMA mounted what was at the time the most expensive lobbying effort in American history to stop this "creeping socialism." Congressional Republicans denounced "socialized medicine" as a communist-inspired assault on personal freedoms, sounding a theme that has been taken up by today's Tea Party yahoos as they fulminate against Obamacare.

Wall Street Bullish on Obamacare

The neo-Confederates of the Tea Party are part of a long tradition of right-wing demagogues railing against "big government." That is coded language for a call to ax social programs portrayed as a "redistribution" of income from hard-working folks to "undeserving" blacks and immigrants. Ironically, as the media increasingly reports on—and Republicans seize upon—examples of families overwhelmed by increased insurance costs, liberal backers of Obama's health plan are putting forward their own version of the redistribution theme. For example, columnist John Harwood argued in the *New York Times* (23 November) that "the redistribution of wealth has always been a central feature of the law" because some must pay higher insurance costs so that coverage can be extended to those with pre-existing medical conditions and others who suffered discrimination at the hands of the insurance companies.

Some working people have bought in to that reasoning, which feeds on the populist notion that "we're all in this together." In our recent subscription drive, comrades encountered unionized black workers in the South who were willing to take a hit on their health care costs—to pay their "fair share"—if it meant that their impoverished relatives might see an improvement in their conditions. In those Southern Republican-controlled states, this sentiment is reinforced by a sense of racial solidarity with the president, particularly as the ACA comes under attack from overt racists. In reality, the fundamental problem in medical care is the obscenely rich owners of the insurance, pharmaceutical and other health care corporations who prey upon the working people and poor.

Almost 20 percent of the entire economic output of the U.S. goes to pay for health care, about twice the level of spending in most industrialized countries. Yet that enormous expenditure does not come close to resulting in a corresponding level of health and welfare of the population. A study by the Institute of Medicine in January compared the health of the U.S. population to that in other economically advanced countries. Americans fared worse in a broad range of categories, including infant mortality, heart disease, chronic lung disease, HIV/AIDS infection, obesity and diabetes. Not surprisingly, life expectancy in the U.S. is lower than in all other advanced industrial countries, and that gap continues to grow.

Like all businesses, for-profit health care companies exist to generate the maximum possible return on their owners' investments. In that regard, those corporations have been spectacularly successful. They are raking in such fabulous profits that the S&P stock index for the health care sector is up 38 percent this year, more than for any other sector of the economy. Big investors are definitely bullish on Obamacare.

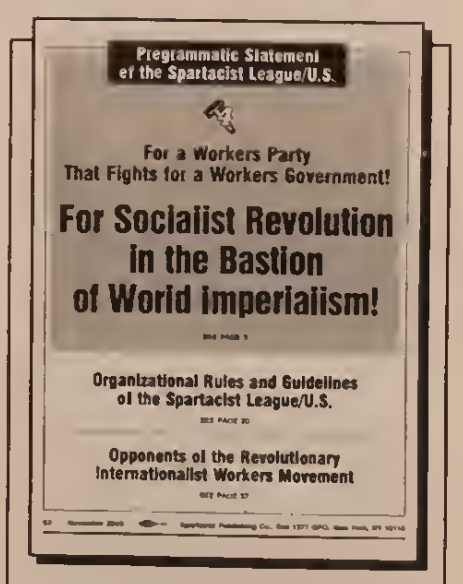
A valuable window into the parasitic dealings of this industry was provided by investigative journalist Steven Brill in a *Time* (20 February) cover story. Brill noted: "When medical care becomes a matter of life and death, the money demanded by the health care ecosystem reaches a wholly different order of magnitude, churning out reams of bills to people who can't focus on them, let alone pay them." He documented cases of hospitals charging patients two and a half times the purchase price of an implantable device, $77 for a box of gauze pads and $1,200 per hour for nursing services. As for the pharmaceutical industry, Michael Moore's 2007 documentary movie *Sicko* showed a woman in Cuba paying a nickel for the same inhaler that in the U.S. cost $120.

Make no mistake: When the capitalist rulers speak of cutting health care costs, they are not referring to the elimination of such obscene examples of the heartless exploitation of working people's suffering. In the interest of swelling profits, the bourgeoisie means to further slash the medical care that is provided to the working population. As the *New York Times* (27 May) put it, companies that are cutting health benefits "are right in line with the administration's plan: To encourage employers to move away from plans that insulate workers from the cost of care and often lead to excessive procedures and tests."

That same logic is fueling the drive to cap Medicaid spending by turning millions of recipients over to private "managed-care organizations." Those outfits are typically paid a fixed sum for providing (grossly inadequate) care. Since 2000, the number of Medicaid enrollees covered by managed care has increased from 19 million to 30 million and now accounts for some 40 percent of beneficiaries.

Growing popular anger at the Wall Street and health insurance robber barons has helped fuel the rise of a number of liberal Democratic Party politicians, such as New York City mayor-elect Bill de Blasio and Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren. Playing the populist card, they reinforce the illusion that the system can be made to work for the little guy. Of course, when the Republican Party revels in union-hashing as well as racist, anti-woman, anti-immigrant reaction, it is easy for a Democrat to appear as the lesser evil. This is despite the fact that "illegal" immigrants and their families are excluded from the ACA, which also will not put a dollar toward abortion services. And that many poorer people who find themselves shelling out more for health care are seeing their food stamp benefits cut by bipartisan agreement.

Populist nostrums help obscure the fundamental *class* divide between the capitalists—the coterie of families who own the banks and means of production, such as the factories and mines—and the working class, whose labor is the source of the capitalists' profits. As such, the working class is the only force with the potential power and historic interest to sweep away the capitalist system. The interest of the capitalist class in the health of the population comes down to maintaining a workforce fit enough to be exploited and to fight in their imperialist wars. To put the immense wealth generated by the labor of working people at the service of human need will require the expropriation of the bourgeoisie through workers revolution and the establishment of a workers state as part of a socialist world. ■



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people before they have the time to settle in the "country of the rights of man." Reactionaries and fascists of all sorts have seized the opportunity to urge revision of *jus soli* [the right of the soil], which under certain conditions grants citizenship to those who were born on French soil.

Around the same time, the cops deported Khatchik Kachatryan to Armenia. He is the first Parisian high school student deported since 2006—when Sarkozy was in charge of the ministry of police. We demand the immediate return of Leonarda and all her family, as well as Khatchik, and we demand they be granted full legal status: ***Full citizenship rights for everyone who made it here! Down with the racist witchhunt against the Roma!***

The Hollande/Valls Government's Racist Campaign

The outrageous treatment of Leonarda epitomizes the violent government campaign against the Roma, who are made scapegoats more than ever in this period of deep economic crisis in order to forestall workers struggle. In France, there are at most a few tens of thousands of Roma from the Balkans, and they are essentially excluded from the proletariat. But for the workers movement to accept attacks against the Roma would make it vulnerable to efforts to divide the working class itself along ethnic, racial and sexual lines, while reinforcing the arsenal of police repression directed against workers.

Manuel Valls, forever in search of a new racist provocation, declared that the Roma were incapable of "integrating" into a civilized society like France. During World War II, the Nazis characterized them as "subhuman," but here in France the laws invoked to lock up the Roma in camps under the Vichy government were in fact enacted by the Third Republic [1870-1940] *before* the Nazi occupation. Some Roma remained interned until 1946 under capitalist governments that included Gaullists, Christian Democrats, Social Democrats of the Second International and Stalinists from the French Communist Party (PCF) [see "France: Down With Racist Anti-Roma Campaign!" *WV* No. 965, 24 September 2010 and *Black History and the Closs Struggle* No. 21, February 2011].

The Roma have been persecuted for centuries, driven from one country to another. In a precapitalist economy, the Gypsies occupied a marginal economic niche as artisans, peddlers and artists. With the development of capitalism, they were pushed to the margins of society, enduring abuses that culminated in the extermination of hundreds of thousands of Gypsies by the Nazis. The truth is that decaying capitalism is incapable of "integrating" the Roma and all the more so in periods of crisis. The French state, including its PCF mayors, chases them from one shantytown to another and then uses the pretext that they are not official residents to refuse to enroll the children in school. When, in spite of these difficulties, children like Leonarda manage to attend school, the state deports them. It refuses the Roma the right to work and then accuses them of living by their wits! ***Down with restrictions on the right to work imposed by the European Union on Bulgorian and Romonion citizens!***

Only socialist revolution will make possible the full integration of Roma into society with equal rights, as shown by the example of the October 1917 proletarian revolution in Russia that overthrew capitalist rule. The October Revolution destroyed the tsarist empire—that prison house of peoples—and laid the basis for freeing the oppressed nations and ethnic minorities, including the Roma, from the jackboot of Great Russian chauvinism.

Romania, including under the grotesque Stalinist regime of Ceausescu, and Tito's Yugoslavia (where Leonarda's family came from) were bureaucratically deformed workers states. The capitalist ruling class had been driven from power and the resulting collectivized, nationalized economy guaranteed the Roma an improved standard of living and an unprecedented ethnic and national integration. Their level of education began to approach that of the rest of the population and they had not only jobs but also housing and health care. The Roma were recognized as a national minority with the right to be educated in their own language. They were settled and relatively integrated into the proletariat and into the military and state apparatus. When Yugoslavia existed, there were radio and TV programs in the Romany language in Kosovo.

The counterrevolutionary destruction of these workers states turned the Balkans, East Europe and the former Soviet Union into a living hell, replete with interethnic massacres, genocidal nationalism and utter poverty. Emigration of Roma from Romania or Kosovo often represented a desperate attempt to flee horrible racist persecution and indescribable misery. Our organization, the International Communist League, fought to the end for unconditional military defense of the USSR and the deformed workers states against capitalist counterrevolution and for proletarian political revolution to sweep away the Stalinist bureaucracies and put in place governments of workers councils (soviets).

There is bitter irony to the fact that groups like Lutte Ouvrière and the New Anti-Capitalist Party (formerly the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire) today decry the persecution of the Roma, after having supported various champions of capitalist "democracy" in Poland and the USSR. The final victory of counterrevolution between 1989 and 1992 has led to new and terrible suffering for the Roma of East Europe and the Balkans.

Immigration and Capitalism

Leonarda and Khatchik were deported, but how many asylum seekers and refugees do not succeed in even reaching the European continent? It is estimated that over the last twenty years more than 6,000 people trying to get into racist Fortress Europe drowned just in the seas around the little Italian island of Lampedusa [see "Mass Drowning of Refugees in Mediterranean," *WV* No. 1034, 15 November].

The capitalists manage the ebbs and flows of immigration according to their own manpower needs. In periods of expansion, they will look for workers from abroad; in periods of crisis, they turn off the tap. With the deepening recession in the European Union—notably in Greece, Portugal and East Europe, which are oppressed by the German and French capitalists and their banks—even the recent shipwrecks off Lampedusa are pretexts for the imperialists to further reinforce police barriers to immigration. The cops of the European surveillance agency "Frontex" are marauding in the Mediterranean as walls go up along the Greek-Turkish border. ***Down with the imperialist European Union! Down with its financial instrument, the euro!***

However, the only perspective reformists like the PCF have is to call for new laws making slight modifications to immigration policy. Similar politics were on display during a lengthy 2009-10 strike of several thousand undocumented workers in Paris and the surrounding region. These workers were mostly left to go it alone as the bureaucrats from the CGT and SUD union federations who supervised this campaign did next to nothing to mobilize their co-workers who had papers. All the bureaucrats demanded was a decree setting standardized criteria for processing immigration applications. They wanted criteria that would give papers to immigrants if they had jobs, thus only benefiting undocumented *workers* and their families—in other words, too bad for the unemployed, for Roma like Leonarda, for [foreign] high school students like Khatchik who are no longer minors.

At the time of the strike, the campaign got unambiguous support from Lutte Ouvrière and other reformist groups. Their aim was to slightly "humanize" the policy of Sarkozy, who openly said he wanted to regulate immigration according to the capitalists' need for manpower. In contrast, we are for full citizenship rights *for everyone who is here.*

Sigot/Archives de la Résistance

Gypsies in Montreuil-Bellay internment camp, France, 1944. Some remained interned by French authorities until May 1946, well after end of Nazi occupation.

Workers Must Defend Minority Youth!

In the framework of this anti-Roma campaign, it is heartening that high school students have fought for the return of Leonarda and Khatchik. High school and college students have often been the spark for working-class struggle. But the closing of high schools, even for weeks, won't hurt the capitalists' profits. The mass youth protest movement of 2006 succeeded against the [rightist] Chirac government's stubborn determination to impose substandard job contracts on young workers only because hundreds of thousands of workers, in growing numbers, went on strike and took to the streets in solidarity. Only the working class has the social power to paralyze the country (the factories, transportation, utilities) and make the bosses back down, as well as the power to ultimately do away with their decaying rule.

The struggle in defense of undocumented immigrants is crucial for the unity of the proletariat, particularly in construction but more generally in industries that use temporary workers on a large scale. The proletariat must fight against all maneuvers by the capitalists and their government to divide workers by ethnicity, race, sex or sexual orientation. Most of the minority high school students who are targets of racist cop violence have papers and were born in France. Many of their older brothers and sisters are part of the proletariat, largely toiling in the most precarious, worst paid and lowest status jobs.

That directly poses the question of a fight for full-time, permanent jobs for all through redividing the available work among all with no loss in pay. This situation cries out for a new union leadership that will not cave in to the bosses or accept new sacrifices in the name of "saving French industry," a revolutionary leadership forged in opposition to the sellout leaders who called for voting for Hollande. Such a leadership would refuse to play by the bosses' rules and not limit itself to what the bosses are ready to grant. It would fight to satisfy the vital needs of the working class. If capitalism cannot satisfy these demands, let it perish! ***The workers movement must defend minority youth! For worker/immigrant mobilizations to crush the fascists!***

As revolutionary Marxists, our task is not to advise the government nor to beg it to adjust its policies to favor the workers and oppressed. But we welcome all gains the workers are able to wrest from the capitalists through their struggles. Our task is to fight to build a workers party modeled on the Bolshevik Party of Lenin, which led the only victorious socialist revolution in history to date. This party would be a "tribune of the people" that denounces all forms of oppression, no matter the class or social layer of the victims, whether Roma, gays, etc. The ICL fights for socialist revolution and its international extension. This is the only road to building a society of abundance for all on the basis of a collectivized planned economy and the power of workers councils. It will take a socialist revolution to put an end once and for all to exploitation, poverty and racist oppression. ***For o Socialist United States of Europe!*** ■

Boston...

(continued from page 3)

campaign." This stand underlines the fact that the Democratic Party, no less than the Republicans, is a party of the bosses.

Some Democrats on the City Council, notably Charles Yancey, have attended union rallies and expressed sympathy for the drivers. Yancey, whom WWP extols as a fighter for labor and black rights, offered to mediate on October 8 but was rebuffed by the company. A press release issued by his office the next day explained that "his immediate concern was to persuade bus drivers to return to work." Seeking to divert workers struggle into bourgeois political channels, he orchestrated a November 21 City Council hearing on Veolia's anti-union practices. Predictably, the event was snubbed by the mayor, school officials and the bus contractor, although the galleries were packed to overflowing by union members and their supporters.

The basis for the contention that the work stoppage was illegal, which was also the pretext for the firings, is the no-strike clause in the union contract—the only provision that Veolia and the city rulers consider binding. Such pledges by the union bureaucrats, which today are standard practice, bury labor's most effective weapon in fighting the bosses. With the line drawn in Boston, all of labor should back Local 8751 as part of revitalizing the unions as fighting organizations against the bosses. ■

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Grangemouth...

(continued from page 12)

any taint of association with the unions, Unite's strategy of "reclaiming" Labour, which was never more than a reformist party loyal to bourgeois rule, is something of an exercise in feeding the hand that bites you. Nevertheless, it was correct and necessary for the union to defend Deans against management, which went after him on the grounds that he was conducting political work on the company's time. In fact, political work is a normal part of a shop steward's job.

In September, union members in Grangemouth voted for strike action in defense of Deans by a resounding 81 percent. The union called a two-day strike to begin on 20 October. But on 15 October, Ineos shut down the entire Grangemouth site, effectively locking out all 1,370 permanent workers as well as some 2,000 temporary contract workers who were already being laid off. What was needed from the outset was a strategy aimed at mobilising the social power of workers throughout the oil industry, in Scotland and elsewhere. Faced with a declaration of war on the union, a leadership worth its salt would have sought to choke off the supply of fuel to petrol stations by appealing for class solidarity from the oil tanker drivers. These members of Unite waged a strike in February that defeated an attack on their pensions by BP, showing that it is possible to fight the bosses and win.

Far from appealing to workers outside the Grangemouth complex, union leaders threatened with the shutdown offered to call off the strike. This betrayal further emboldened Ratcliffe, who issued an ultimatum to the workforce: sign an agreement slashing jobs, pensions and pay, or be sacked. Once again, union members voted to fight, rejecting Ratcliffe's blackmail by a two-thirds majority. On 23 October, Ineos announced the permanent closure of the petrochemical facility, with the loss of 800 jobs, supposedly because it was in "financial distress." The Unite leadership surrendered completely. Unite general secretary Len McCluskey and Scottish regional secretary Pat Rafferty agreed to swallow the "survival plan" that union members had rejected a few days before. The plant was reopened on Ratcliffe's terms, which include a three-year pay freeze, a no-strike agreement, an end to the final-salary pension plan and no more full-time union representatives on site.

Rather than call this defeat by its right name, the bureaucrats spun the story as if they had won a victory by "saving jobs." Rafferty said: "Relief will ring right round the Grangemouth community, and across Scotland today. Hundreds of jobs that would have been lost can now be saved and £300 [$480] million will be invested into the plant" (Unite Web site, 25 October). McCluskey declared: "I went to Scotland last week to save those 800 jobs and keep a vital national asset open in the face of a real threat of closure,"

Union News.co.uk

Unite senior shop steward Stephen Deans in September. After witchhunt by Labour Party leadership, he was hounded out of job by Ineos management.

admitting that the deal with Ineos is not that different from "the difficult discussions my union and others have had with many employers during the current banking slump" (*Guardian*, 30 October).

For the pro-capitalist union bureaucracy, "saving jobs" means the workers must make sacrifices to maintain the company's profitability. Over the decades, such class collaboration has led to one sellout after another. Take the much celebrated 1971 work-in at the financially troubled Upper Clyde shipyard—led by Communist Party-affiliated union officials and supported by Labour "left" Tony Benn—which saw workers complete orders rather than take industrial action. Today, only two shipyards remain on the Clyde, with the loss of 1,800 more jobs looming between the Scottish yards and England's centuries-old Portsmouth facility. Shipyard workers, who mainly work on strategically important Ministry of Defence contracts, have the industrial muscle to fight these threats. To wield that power requires a class-struggle programme, not the class collaboration that has proven utterly ineffective in preventing the capitalist production system from chewing up workers and throwing them on the scrapheap according to the whims of the world market and the relentless pursuit of profit.

The attacks on Unite have continued unabated since Grangemouth reopened, with the *Sunday Times* and *Daily Mail* adding fuel to the fire. The dirty anti-union smear campaign is all to the benefit of Prime Minister David Cameron's Tories, as Unite provides substantial funds to the Labour Party. Meanwhile, Stephen Deans has been hounded out of his job and is not seeking re-election to his position in the Labour Party.

The attack on Unite is part of an assault on all workers, in Britain and internationally, to make them pay for the global capitalist crisis. There is no simple trade-union solution to the ills of the capitalist system. But if the unions are to become effective in fighting for their own interests—and those of the unorganised working class, temporary/agency workers and the unemployed—what is needed is a new leadership that bases itself on a programme of class struggle against the capitalist order, as opposed to class collaboration. This task is linked to the forging of a revolutionary workers party to fight for a workers government that would organise production for social need, not for profit.

Reformists Hark Back to "Old Labour"

The Grangemouth betrayal shows that the "socialist" left lacks any alternative to the bankrupt politics of the trade-union leadership. Both the Socialist Party of England and Wales, which advocated a vote for McCluskey as Unite leader, and the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) bemoaned the fact that he didn't fight. For these groups, the way to "save jobs" is to appeal to capitalist governments to nationalise ailing enterprises, a call raised by McCluskey himself at Grangemouth. The SWP looked to pressure Cameron's government in Westminster, saying that "a real campaign to nationalise Grangemouth would have been very hard for the weak and divided Tories to ignore" (*Socialist Worker*, 5 November). Showing a preference for the Scottish National Party (SNP), which runs the Scottish parliament, the Socialist Party Scotland wrote: "Decisive action by Unite, including the occupation of an appropriate part of the site, would gain mass support and apply huge political pressure on the Scottish government to carry through the nationalisation of the plant" (quoted in "Trade Unions Must Learn Lessons from Grangemouth Setback," socialistpartyscotland.org.uk, 25 October). Never mind that the SNP was working in collusion with the Ineos bosses!

Plant occupations flout the property rights of the bosses, and in so doing point the road forward in the struggle for working-class power. But for the reformists this tactic is a means to bring pressure toward nationalising industry under capitalism. In the same framework, Socialist Party Scotland raises the demand for Ineos to open the books to inspection by the trade unions. Gaining access to the *real* books can be useful to exposing the truth behind the company's propaganda. Unite appointed accountants to study the company's published finances in order to challenge Ratcliffe's claims that the Grangemouth plant would have to close because it was losing £10 million a month. However, in the absence of class struggle; such exposure had little effect on Ratcliffe. By calling off the strike, the union tops were in no position to call the company's bluff—once the union leadership folded, the bosses did not have to show their hand.

One thing is certain: the Ineos bosses hyped up fears about job losses to turn the screw on the union and to grind more out of the workers, while milking taxpayers to underwrite millions in loans that will make Grangemouth a more lucrative source of profits for City of London investors. Moreover, if Grangemouth had been taken over by a capitalist government—whether in Edinburgh or in London—as the reformists demand, pensions, wages and bonuses would have been slashed as much as they were under the Ineos "survival plan." In contrast to reformist "socialists" who put forward nationalisation schemes to rescue failing capitalist enterprises, Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky declared:

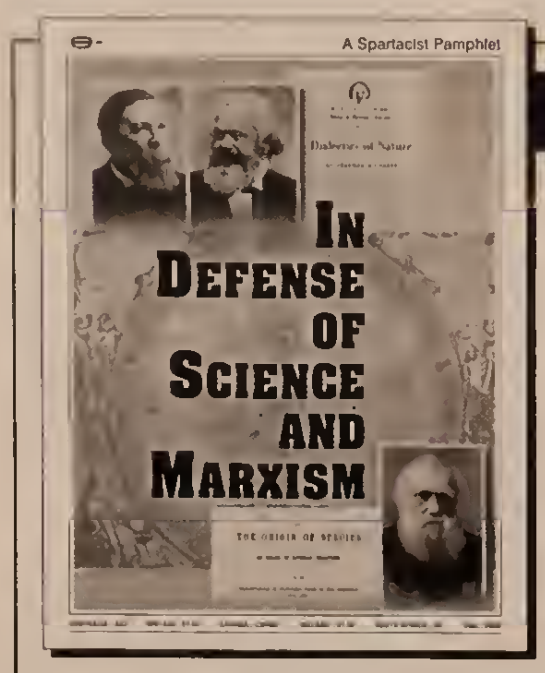
> "We can say to the miner, you wish nationalization. Yes, it is our slogan. It is only the question of conditions. If the national property is too burdened with debts against former owners, your conditions can become worse than now. To base the whole proceedings upon a free agreement between the owners and the state signifies ruin of the workers. Now you must organize your own government in the state and expropriate them."
>
> —"For a Workers' and Farmers' Government," July 1938, printed in *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution* (Pathfinder, 1977)

Marxists advocate the nationalisation without compensation of certain strategic industries, such as that related to North Sea oil and gas, including the refineries. This perspective has nothing in common with the social-democratic call for nationalisations to hail out bankrupt industries. Bourgeois nationalisations can do nothing to fundamentally counteract the ravages of the boom-bust cycle of the capitalist system that periodically puts entire sections of industry out of business with devastating consequences for the working class. Under a planned economy administered by a workers government, collectivised industry would play a profoundly liberating role. The rational allocation of resources within the framework of an international division of labour would unleash the productive forces, strengthening the working class.

Labour Betrayals Boost Scots Nationalists

For the Socialist Party Scotland, Grangemouth shows yet again that "today Labour does not support workers in struggle and that Unite should come out clearly in favour of a new mass workers' party, public ownership and a real political alternative to the austerity agenda" (25 October). The illusion that old Labour supported workers in past struggles is central to the Socialist Party's core programmatic commitment to recreating an old Labour-type party, i.e., a party based on the trade-union bureaucracy and the myth of public ownership under a bourgeois government. This myth was enshrined in Clause IV of the Labour Party's constitution, which nominally committed the party to "common ownership of the means of production" and codified the notion that socialism could be achieved through legislation in parliament. It thereby was a rejection of the need to smash the capitalist state (the class dictatorship of the bourgeoisie) and establish a workers state, the dictatorship of the proletariat. The adoption of Clause IV in 1918 was an attempt to deflect the radicalising impact on the working class of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution.

Labour was founded as a bourgeois workers party—while saddled with a pro-capitalist leadership, its membership consisted primarily of the trade unions. In 1994, shortly after counterrevolution in the Soviet Union, Tony Blair announced the abolition of Clause IV, signaling his intention to transform Labour into an outright capitalist party. The process stalled due to Labour's dependence on trade-union funding, but as we observed



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in 2008: "New Labour today is moribund as a reformist party of the working class" (*Workers Hammer* No. 204, Autumn 2008). As a follow-up to the witchhunt of Deans and the local party in Falkirk, Miliband has picked up where Blair left off, calling a special conference next spring to end the system whereby union members are registered en masse as members of the Labour Party.

For the Labourite left, the high tide of old Labour and Clause IV was the nationalisation of coal, steel and other industries by the Clement Attlee government elected in 1945. In the context of Britain's dramatic decline from its once-dominant role in the world economy, these giant capitalist bailouts were designed to help British capitalism to compete in the world market. In that sense, the post-WWII nationalisations under old Labour were no more socialist than the bailout of the banks carried out in 2008 under the then-New Labour government (or, for that matter, by the Bush/Obama regimes in the United States).

Social-democratic support for nationalisation of failing industries goes hand-in-hand with protectionism and national chauvinism, which is poison to working-class consciousness. A grotesque example is the 2009 construction workers' strikes at Lindsey oil refinery in Lincolnshire demanding "British jobs for British workers," in which the Socialist Party of England and Wales played a prominent role. We vehemently opposed this reactionary campaign, which was not intended to secure more jobs or defend existing jobs, but to give preference to British over foreign workers in the allocation of existing jobs. In rejecting such divide-and-rule ploys that

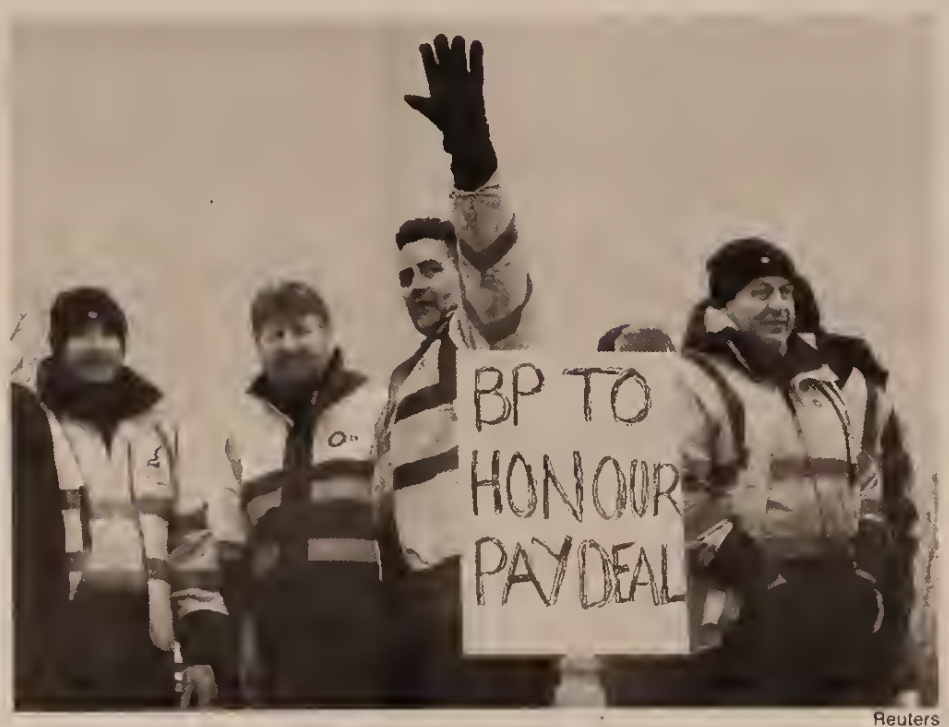
AFP

Edinburgh: Scottish nationalist demonstration on September 21 calling for a "yes" vote in 2014 independence referendum.

of dismissal against the shop steward Stephen Deans." While such declarations of paper solidarity do not carry great weight in and of themselves, they point to the possibility of mobilising the unions in concrete acts of class solidarity.

SNP Hails Grangemouth as Scotland's Future

Reformist leftists in Scotland (and in England), who previously tailed Labour, are now in thrall to the bourgeois-nationalist Scottish National Party. The SNP, which controls the Scottish parliament in Edinburgh, is campaigning for a "yes" vote in next year's referendum on



Reuters

February 2013: British Petroleum tanker drivers in Grangemouth organized by Unite waged successful three-day strike over pensions and pay.

pit workers of different countries against each other, we called for the unions to defend the rights of immigrant workers and organise the unorganised. We wrote: "Consistent opposition to these reactionary strikes requires a revolutionary internationalist programme and a perspective of mobilising the multiethnic working class in Britain in a struggle for the revolutionary overthrow of the racist capitalist system" (*Workers Hammer* No. 206, Spring 2009 [reprinted in *WV* No. 937, 22 May 2009]).

North of the border, the Socialist Party Scotland shamelessly panders to Scottish nationalism. The demands they raised during the Grangemouth showdown were entirely limited in scope to Scotland, mainly to Grangemouth itself, with no attempt made to appeal to workers at oil refineries in England and Wales. At least on paper, oil unions in other European countries had defended the union rep at Grangemouth. Leif Sande, president of the trade union Industri Energi in Norway representing 60,000 oil, gas and related industry workers, wrote a letter demanding that Ineos Britain put "an end to the intrusive and accusatory investigations and threats

independence. The "vote no" campaign is led by Labour—for decades the main party in Scotland—which argues for Scotland to remain in the "United Kingdom," but with more autonomy.

SNP leader and Scotland's first minister Alex Salmond, who helped broker the anti-union deal at Grangemouth, crowed when it reopened that the plant has a "bright future." Some future. Grangemouth—one of Scotland's few remaining industrial complexes, where the trade union has now been crippled and workers cowed into submission—indeed prefigures the kind of future the working class can expect in capitalist Scotland, independent or otherwise. The SNP's vision of "independence" does not include a break with the British monarchy or the sterling currency.

We revolutionaries oppose the reactionary entity known as the "United Kingdom," which is centred on the monarchy, the House of Lords and the established (Protestant) churches and incorporates the Orange statelet in Northern Ireland. The Westminster parliament reflects the favoured status granted to finance capital, the City of London and the Home Counties of southeast England by the ruling class, which has nothing but contempt for the former industrial areas of northern England as well as Scotland and Wales. We uphold the right of self-determination for Scotland and Wales, which means the right to form independent states.

As such, we defend the democratic right of the Scots to choose whichever option they want in the independence referendum, but we do not advocate either a "yes" or a "no" vote and are indifferent to the outcome. Our programme is for a voluntary federation of workers republics in the British Isles. Within such a federation, we do not predetermine what Scotland's status will be—an independent workers republic, an autonomous region or any other status of their choice compatible with working-class rule.

The right of self-determination also implies the right *not* to separate. This course can be preferable for semi-assimilated nations like Scotland and Wales, both of which lack decisive differences in either language or religion with England. When the Spartacist League/Britain was founded a year before the era of Margaret Thatcher began, we declared: "We are for the *right* of self-determination, but call on the Scottish people to exercise that right by choosing to stay in the same state as the other peoples of Britain" (*Spartacist Britain* No. 1, April 1978). Over the course of the intervening decades, our press has stated many times that the pervasive English chauvinism of the British bourgeoisie could well drive the Scots toward separation. This was clearly seen during the Thatcher years, when the hated Poll Tax was imposed first on Scotland, in 1989. The destruction of manufacturing industry has had particularly devastating consequences in Scotland, whose proletariat was often in the vanguard of the British trade unions.

One affront after another—from the treachery of Labourite union leaders that sealed the defeat of the year-long 1984-85 miners strike by the Thatcher government, to New Labour's subsequent adoption of Thatcherite policies—has increasingly driven the working class in Scotland to electorally support the Scottish nationalists, although not necessarily the call for independence. The SNP's popularity with former Labour supporters has more to do with policies that the Scottish parliament has introduced, including free prescriptions, free personal care for the elderly, no university tuition fees and a freeze on the council [municipal services] tax. By contrast, Labour promises not to reverse the Tory cuts in public spending if elected.

Central to the SNP's case for independence is the claim: "It's Scotland's oil." From the time it came on stream in the late 1970s, North Sea oil was also claimed by the British capitalist rulers to be the solution to the country's profound economic decline. The Thatcher regime shut down most of the coal mines—largely as a political move to destroy the militant miners union—and promoted North Sea oil and gas as the country's main source of energy. Even at its most productive, when revenues poured into London, North Sea oil did not fundamentally improve British capitalism's position relative to that of its rivals. And now North Sea oil has passed its peak. The cost of exploration and extraction is growing, and the oil giants are shifting their investments to more lucrative areas of the world. With oil profits set to decline even further, the British ruling class increasingly views Scotland as an economic drain, a phenomenon reflected in the frequent ranting in the English chauvinist press about subsidies to Scotland.

Trillions of dollars are invested worldwide in infrastructure related to oil and gas production and refining. At the same time, the price of oil can be wildly unstable. In the naked pursuit of profit, the big oil companies are always striving to ratchet up the rate of exploitation of the working class. The industry is also notoriously unsafe—from the industrial murder of 167 workers on the North Sea's Piper Alpha platform in 1988 to the numerous fatalities in crashes of helicopters ferrying workers to and from the rigs.

The Grangemouth plant produces much of Scotland's refined petroleum and chemical exports, but like the rest of Europe it is struggling to cope with falling consumer demand for petrol and stiffer competition, with shale gas production slashing the price of American chemical products. Britain increasingly imports its diesel, even as it exports much of the petrol it produces. Meanwhile, the government is expanding its nuclear energy capacity and has plans for shale gas. Britain's aging refineries are also facing competition from modern ones in the Near East, India and China. As a result, the Coryton refinery in Essex closed last year, with Milford Haven refinery in Wales reportedly now under threat of closure.

One of the lessons to draw from Grangemouth is the need for an industrial union of all oil workers. As we wrote in "Oil Workers—Shut Down Production Now!" (*Workers Hammer* No. 116, September 1990) during a series of strikes and occupations of North Sea oil rigs: "A hard strike would lay the basis for forging one solid union of all onshore and offshore oil workers. Production workers, as well as maintenance and catering workers, must be mobilised in struggle: a Piper Alpha-type inferno does not distinguish between contract workers and others." In the wider context of war moves by the U.S. and British imperialist powers against oil-rich Iraq, the article concluded:

> "Thatcher has particularly targeted the working people of Scotland, with her devastation of the Upper Clyde, the coalfields and now Ravenscraig [steel plant]. Those who are lucky have got jobs doing hard, demanding and dangerous work offshore. And whether Labour or Tories administer capitalism the companies will extract extortionate profits from the sweat, blood and corpses of oil workers. That wealth should benefit not a handful of bankers, capitalists, colonels and sheikhs but the working people of the world, who will lay claim to it through proletarian revolution and the establishment of an international socialist order." ■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

AFP photos

European Gypsies Under Siege

French Government Crackdown on Roma, Immigrants

Left: Children cast out on the street after French police shut down Roma camp outside Lyon, August 2012. Fifteen-year-old Leonarda Dibrani, shown with her family in Kosovo on October 19 after their deportation from France.

In recent months, there has been a dramatic increase in vicious attacks against Roma (Gypsies) across Europe, where the 10 to 12 million Roma make up the largest and one of the most oppressed minority populations. Hounded by ingrained racism, Roma are routinely excluded from employment and housing and made to live in conditions with little or no sanitation. In the context of the ongoing economic crisis, the European capitalist governments are offering up the Roma as scapegoats for worsening conditions and rising unemployment—taking aim at an easy target, a marginalized and defenseless people persecuted for centuries. The capitalists' chauvinist media has whipped up a storm recalling medieval lies about Roma stealing children, now repackaged under the rubric of "human trafficking."

In mid October, cops raided a Roma camp in central Greece on a drug sweep and snatched up a 4-year-old girl with fair hair and blue eyes, arresting her parents. The girl, Maria, doesn't fit the stereotype of the Roma, so the media christened her the "Blonde Angel" and splashed her photo around the world. It turns out that her biological mother is a Bulgarian Roma who had been living in Greece. Forced to return to Bulgaria, the mother had arranged for Maria to be brought up by a different Roma family in Greece.

But these mundane facts of a childcare arrangement common in every culture did not prevail against the chauvinist hysteria that spread like wildfire across Europe. Within days, two pale-skinned Roma children in Ireland were abducted from their parents by state authorities and subjected to DNA tests to "prove" they were who their parents said they were. For the Irish capitalist state, anti-Roma racism is part and parcel of its longstanding oppression of Irish Travellers, a distinct ethnic group with their own language and culture whose historically itinerant way of

continued on page 8

Grangemouth: Labour Party Paved Way for Attack

Union Bashing at Scottish Oil Refinery

The following article was written by our comrades of the Spartacist League/ Britain.

On 25 October, the leaders of Britain's biggest trade union, Unite, signed a deal amounting to a humiliating defeat for workers at Scotland's only oil refinery, in Grangemouth. Formerly owned by British Petroleum (BP), the vast industrial complex on the Firth of Forth near Falkirk powers a major pipeline from the North Sea and supplies fuel to pumps throughout Scotland, Northern Ireland and parts of northern England. Since the takeover of the facility by the Ineos corporation in 2006, boss Jim Ratcliffe has been determined to break the union. His previous assault on the pension plan was defeated by a successful two-day strike in 2008, which shut down the pipeline that carries 30 percent of Britain's oil.

The stage for the recent anti-union attack was set by the Labour Party leadership, which instigated a vicious witchhunt against Stephen Deans, a senior shop steward who worked for 25 years at Grangemouth. Bowing to Tory [Conservative Party] allegations that Unite was rigging the selection of a candidate in the Falkirk district, Labour leader Ed Miliband called in the police to investigate the local party branch, of which Deans was chairman at the time. Not a shred of evidence was found, by either the cops or the Labour Party's own investigation. But the dirty deed was done. The oil bosses continued with disciplinary proceedings against Deans, threatening him with the sack [firing].

The accusations against Deans stem from the union's role in recruiting around 150 union members into the Labour Party and backing its preferred parliamentary candidate. This strategy is politically misguided, to put it mildly. Given the intense hostility of the Labour Party elite toward

continued on page 10

Press Association

October 20: Locked-out Unite union workers protest outside oil refinery in Grangemouth, Scotland.

WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 1036

13 December 2013

U.S./Japanese Imperialists: Hands Off China!

On November 23, the Chinese government declared an Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) in the East China Sea, requiring any aircraft passing through airspace off its coast to identify itself. The ADIZ is an elementary measure of China's defense. As Japan's *Nikkei* (29 November) noted, not only do Japanese surveillance aircraft patrol these waters, but also for U.S. spy planes "it is not rare to fly close to the Chinese coast and collect information." Despite the fact that the U.S., Japan and South Korea have their own ID zones, each of their governments was quick to denounce China's declaration as an act of aggression.

It is the U.S. and Japanese imperialists and Washington's South Korean underlings who are dangerously escalating tensions in the region as they firm up their alliance against China, a bureaucratically deformed workers state. Shortly after Beijing's declaration of the ADIZ, two U.S. B-52 bombers flew through the zone without filing flight plans,

continued on page 6

Democrats, Republicans Take Ax to Food Stamps

Capitalists Starve Workers, Poor

WV Photos

Left: Food line at community center in South Central Los Angeles, December 4. Right: Fast-food workers and supporters demand increased minimum wage at rally outside McDonald's in L.A., December 5.

With a growing number of billionaires in its ranks and the stock market booming, the ruling class in the U.S. is giddy with greed. In its quest to stockpile wealth, this tiny capitalist elite keeps bleeding working people dry. As a result, the mass of the population continues to reel from the effects of the Great Recession triggered by rampant financial speculation in the housing market, even as the banks and other big businesses declare a renaissance. The Bloomberg news service, founded by the world's richest (now departing) mayor, recently trumpeted: "Wages Stagnate as U.S. Manufacturers Reap Record Profits" (21 November). Not satisfied with slashing pay to the bone, the insatiable capitalist rulers are also further gutting those meager social benefits that help keep workers and the poor afloat. And greater hunger and misery are on the horizon, as the $5 billion cut in food stamps last month attests.

Some 47.5 million food stamp recipients, nearly half of them children, were impacted by this step, which was approved by Democrats and Republicans alike. This benefit loss was triggered by the lapse of a temporary increase in funding for food stamps—the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)—included in the 2009 economic stimulus act. The toll of the cut was immediate, as families were forced to scrimp even more on meals and to seek out emergency food pantries.

For all the talk of government dysfunction and gridlock, both parties of capital have showed proficiency in screwing the poor. And more cuts are on the way—the only real question is how much. In alternate farm bills that set the funding for food stamps, the Democratic-controlled Senate voted for $4 billion in cuts, while the Republican-controlled House voted for $40 billion. This is despite the fact that the number of food stamp recipients has swelled by 80 percent over the last six years of economic downturn.

Although the unemployment rate fell last month to its lowest level since 2008, the prospects of finding a job at anything resembling decent pay remain very dim. So much so that droves of people have simply given up on looking for work, the main factor accounting for that rate drop. In the time since the financial crisis claimed 8.7 million jobs, only 7.4 million have been created, and these overwhelmingly pay low wages. Half of all employees in America now earn less than $26,000 a year, barely above the official poverty level for a family of four. Among the factors swelling the legions of the working poor—from Wal-Mart "associates" to college adjunct professors—is President Obama's Affordable Care Act. The law has encouraged employers to cut hours to avoid providing health care while jacking up insurance costs for much of the workforce.

Working households today constitute 40 percent of food stamp recipients, with one quarter of the overall U.S. workforce depending on some form of public assistance. In a sign of the times, Wal-Mart had the audacity to set up a food bank for its own miserably paid employees before Thanksgiving, and McDonald's counseled its staff on eating smaller mouthfuls so it would feel like they had more food. Long gone are the days when soup kitchens and food pantries were just for the "down-and-outs" and families in acute crisis. Such charities are keeping countless people alive who would starve on what the employers and government dole out, as food prices rise faster than all other expenses except transportation costs and medical bills. In New York City, food charities were already rationing portion sizes and turning people away before Superstorm Sandy struck last year and threw many more on their mercy.

With affordable housing a rarity in the city, more and more New Yorkers, many of them women with young children, are punching out of work only to sign in to homeless shelters. Pricing working people out of city residences extends to San Francisco, where one worker explained: "Now it's hard to be a middle-class person with what used to seem like a really good salary in this city" (*New York Times*,

continued on page 7

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Drop Charges Against CUNY Protesters!

Over the past semester, the City University of New York (CUNY) administration has been on a tear to suppress leftist political activity. Its latest reprisal was to bring criminal charges against Khalil Vasquez and Tafadar Sourov for their role in protesting the closure of the Morales/Shakur Center at City College of New York (CCNY) on October 24. The administration had shut down the center, a meeting space for leftist, minority and other student and community groups, after weeks of demonstrations against war criminal David Petraeus teaching at CUNY and the return of the Reserve Officers Training Corps to campus.

WV Photo

November 19: Rally after court hearing in Manhattan for CUNY activists Tafadar Sourov and Khalil Vasquez (from left to right, under sign).

Vasquez and Sourov, both of the Revolutionary Student Coordinating Committee, had already been suspended from CCNY following the October 24 protest, as reported in our *Young Spartacus* pages (see "Rescind Suspensions of CCNY Protesters!", *WV* No. 1034, 15 November). On Novemher 22, at a CCNY disciplinary hearing regarding their suspension, both students pleaded "no contest and no admission of guilt." As a result, they will be allowed to return to CCNY next semester, but the suspension will only be expunged from their record provided they stay in line by the lights of the administration.

Vasquez and Sourov have a court appearance scheduled for January 9, the same day as several of the CUNY 6 protesters who face bogus misdemeanor charges stemming from a September 17 anti-Petraeus protest that was brutally attacked by city cops. We urge our readers to send letters demanding that all charges against the CUNY protesters be dropped. Statements can be directed to: New York County District Attorney Cyrus Vance, Jr., One Hogan Place, New York, NY 10013; telephone: (212) 335-9000; fax: (212) 335-4390. Donations to the CUNY 6 legal defense fund can be made at defendthecuny6.wordpress.com.

We print below a letter sent by the Partisan Defense Committee to District Attorney Vance on November 23.

* * *

The Partisan Defense Committee denounces the outrageous prosecution of student activists Tafadar Sourov and Khalil Vasquez. The two City College of New York (CCNY) students face a year in prison for exercising their right to free speech and assembly while protesting the closure of the Morales/Shakur Center at CCNY. We demand that all of the charges be dropped.

In an effort to silence Sourov and Vasquez, and also send a message to other student protesters, the CUNY administration has pressed charges against the students for "rioting" and "inciting to riot," at an October 24 protest against the closure of the Morales/Shakur Center. They have also accused Sourov of attempting to assault a campus police officer during the protest. These charges are classically pulled out of a hat to stifle dissidents or cover up police misconduct or hoth. The fact is that the CUNY administration is blatantly punishing students for voicing dissent on campus and using any means necessary to silence them.

The vendetta against Sourov and Vasquez is part of an ongoing campaign to stifle dissent after weeks of protests across the CUNY campuses. Students and activists have been protesting former CIA director David Petraeus teaching at CUNY, the return of Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) to CUNY campuses and the sinister closing of the Morales/Shakur Center at CCNY. At one such protest against Petraeus on September 17, six activists were brutally attacked by police, arrested and charged with several bogus misdemeanors, such as "riot in the second degree."

We demand that all of the charges against Sourov and Vasquez and the CUNY 6 be dropped immediately.■

TROTSKY

LENIN

Religion and Capitalist Charity

Especially around the holiday season, the capitalists seek to salve their consciences by throwing a few crumbs to the poor and working masses in the name of "remembering the neediest." Such self-interested charity normally comes with a heavy dose of religious sentiment, which, as Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin explains in the quote below, helps further capitalist exploitation by diverting the working class from the struggle to improve its material conditions.

The economic oppression of the workers inevitably calls forth and engenders every kind of political oppression and social humiliation, the coarsening and darkening of the spiritual and moral life of the masses. The workers may secure a greater or lesser degree of political liberty to fight for their economic emancipation, but no amount of liberty will rid them of poverty, unemployment, and oppression until the power of capital is overthrown. Religion is one of the forms of spiritual oppression which everywhere weighs down heavily upon the masses of the people, overhurdened by their perpetual work for others, by want and isolation. Impotence of the exploited classes in their struggle against the exploiters just as inevitably gives rise to the belief in a better life after death as impotenee of the savage in his battle with nature gives rise to belief in gods, devils, miracles, and the like. Those who toil and live in want all their lives are taught by religion to be submissive and patient while here on earth, and to take comfort in the hope of a heavenly reward. But those who live by the labour of others are taught by religion to practise charity while on earth, thus offering them a very cheap way of justifying their entire existence as exploiters and selling them at a moderate price tickets to well-being in heaven. Religion is opium for the people. Religion is a sort of spiritual booze, in which the slaves of capital drown their human image, their demand for a life more or less worthy of man.

But a slave who has become conscious of his slavery and has risen to struggle for his emancipation has already half ceased to be a slave. The modern class-conscious worker, reared by large-scale factory industry and enlightened by urban life, contemptuously casts aside religious prejudices, leaves heaven to the priests and bourgeois bigots, and tries to win a better life for himself here on earth. The proletariat of today takes the side of socialism, which enlists science in the battle against the fog of religion, and frees the workers from their belief in life after death by welding them together to fight in the present for a better life on earth.

—V.I. Lenin, "Socialism and Religion" (December 1905)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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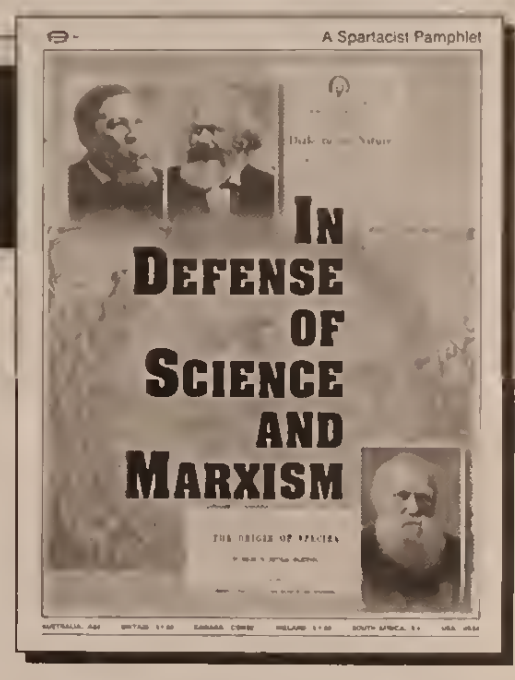
New Spartacist Pamphlet



The Spartacist League's new pamphlet is a collection of seven articles reprinted from *Workers Vanguard*. The contents illustrate why Marxists passionately defend the acquisition of scientifie knowledge and technological advances against retrograde ideology, e.g., mysticism, superstition, quackery, social reaction. The counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union two decades ago, combined with a low ebb in class struggle, has created a climate that provides a breeding ground for such backwardness.

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The articles also situate scientific questions in their historical context. At the time of the Industrial Revolution, as the ascendant bourgeoisie was supplanting the feudal order, there was not only tremendous scientific progress but also leaps in the conception of human freedom, based on the Enlightenment. But capitalism's progressive epoch ended long ago; the application of "liberty, equality and fraternity" was limited to what would allow the new ruling class to succeed in abolishing the feudal barriers to its making money through exploiting the working class. Today in the epoch of capitalist decay, science is heavily beholden to the bourgeois state and its purse strings.

Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky captured the contradiction of technological and seientific development under capitalism:

> "Technology and science have their own logic—the logic of the cognition of nature and the mastering of it in the interests of man. But technology and science develop not in a vacuum but in human society, which consists of classes. The ruling class, the possessing class, controls technology and through it controls nature. Technology in itself cannot be called either militaristic or pacifistic. In a society in which the ruling class is militaristic, technology is in the service of militarism."
>
> —"Radio, Science, Technology, and Society," March 1926

The articles in the pamphlet cover a wide range of topics. Since Marxism is the application of scientific observation and analysis to the realm of class society, Darwin's theory of evolution, which freed the study of biology from the grip of religion by providing a material explanation for the origin of species, is fittingly featured. The lead article, "In Defense of Marxism and Science," examines some key moments in the history of science and shows how leading figures were also committed to progressive social struggles of their time. "Science and the Battle Against Racism and Obscurantism" honors the evolutionary biologist Stephen Jay Gould, who spent the better part of his life combating pseudo-scientific racist dogmas and Christian creationist nonsense.

An article on Alfred Kinsey explores his studies of human sexual behavior, aimed at challenging the fear and ignorance surrounding sex. "Capitalism and Global Warming" explains that tackling the human-derived aspects of global warming is futile within the boundaries of the anarchic capitalist system. An article on Richard Dawkins and other "new atheist" writers provides a historical materialist understanding of religion as against that offered by these bourgeois rationalists.

As scientific socialists, our defense of science is ultimately linked to the fight for world proletarian revolution. Socialist society will accept with gratitude the heritage of scientific knowledge and build on it in order to achieve the communist goal of eliminating scarcity and want.

1930s Scottsboro Case

Communists and the Fight for Black Liberation

In November, the Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles voted unanimously to posthumously pardon Haywood Patterson, Charles Weems and Andy Wright. They were part of the "Scottshoro Boys," nine unemployed black youth who were framed up in Scottsboro, Alabama, in 1931 for rapes that never happened. The case has long been emblematic of racist injustice in the United States. For more than 80 years it has been as clear as day that the nine were innocent, so the pardons were a cheap way for Alabama to attempt to refurbish its image—just like racist demagogue George Wallace pardoned the last of the nine still living in 1976. While Alabama's politicians gloat over how they have finally granted "justice" to people who have been dead for decades, there are 193 inmates, disproportionately black, on Alabama's death row.

The Scottsboro Nine were hauled off a freight train by police in Scottshoro after an altercation between white and black youth who had been "riding the rails" during the Great Depression. One of the nine was 13, two were 14 and the oldest was 21. The police pressured two white women who had been traveling on the train into claiming they had been victims of gang rape. Normally, black men accused of raping white women would have been lynched by a mob, but this time the authorities preferred a legal lynching. Within two weeks, the nine were framed up, tried and convicted by an all-white jury. Eight were sentenced to death, and the youngest to life in prison.

The American Communist Party (CP) and its defense arm, the International Labor Defense (ILD), immediately took up the case. The ILD's legal efforts exposed the frame-up for the sham it was. In the process, it won two landmark U.S. Supreme Court decisions protecting the right to legal representation and outlawing the exclusion of black jurors simply on the basis of their skin color. Most important to the defense strategy was building mass protests of hundreds of thousands against the frame-up and the entire racist system of capitalist justice. Due to these efforts, demands to free the Scottsboro Boys rang out around the world. Liberals like the middle-class NAACP initially wanted nothing to do with defending impoverished black youth accused of rape—a longstanding pretext for lynching. But due to pressure from the campaign, the NAACP was forced to denounce the frame-up, even as it tried to edge the CP out.

Brown Brothers

Scottsboro Nine with defense attorney Samuel Leibowitz in Alabama jail, 1933.

In addition to shining a spotlight on the atrocities of the Jim Crow South, the Communist campaign also highlighted the continuity between the lynch mob and the electric chair. It succeeded in preventing Alabama from executing the Scottsboro Nine, but it did not stop the state from trying. The ILD won retrials for the black youth only to see them convicted again, setting off a chain reaction of one appeal after another in kangaroo courts.

One of the women who had accused the nine, Ruby Bates, recanted and testified for the defense in 1933. Driven out of the South for exposing the frame-up, she joined the defense campaign and toured with the ILD. In July 1937, prosecutors dropped rape charges against five of the defendants. The remaining four were convicted yet again and sentenced to death or decades in prison hell. Between 1943 and 1950, three of them were paroled and, in 1948, Patterson escaped from prison to Michigan (where the governor refused to extradite him to Alabama).

The Scottshoro campaign was just one prominent example of how Communists were in the forefront of fighting against racial oppression and lynch law terror in the 1930s. Amid the devastation of the Depression, they organized the black and white unemployed, sharecroppers and industrial workers. Their efforts put the struggle for black rights on the national agenda in a significant way for the first time since the early Populist movement in the 1890s. Writing at the time of the civil rights movement, James P. Cannon, an early Communist leader and founder of the ILD, underscored the role of V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky's Communist International (Comintern) in convincing the American CP to appreciate the centrality of the struggle against black oppression:

> "Everything new on the Negro question came from Moscow—after the Russian Revolution began to thunder its demand throughout the world for freedom and equality for all national minorities, all subject peoples and all races—for all the despised and rejected of the earth."
>
> —"The Russian Revolution and the American Negro Movement," *The First Ten Years of American Communism* (1962)

In 1928, Cannon and his cothinkers were expelled from the CP and the ILD for supporting Trotsky's fight against the degeneration of the Comintern that accompanied the rise of a parasitic bureaucracy headed by Stalin in the Soviet Union. During the 1928-34 Third Period, Communists in the U.S. left the AFL craft unions to form small "red unions," effectively sealing themselves off from the mass of the organized working class. The Stalinization of the Communist International also led to disorientation for the American CP on the black question, as it did on all other issues.

In line with the class-collaborationist strategy of the "People's Front" adopted by the Comintern after Hitler came to power in Germany, the CP began to tail "progressive" capitalist politicians during the mid 1930s. The CP became a subordinate part of Democratic president Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal coalition, which comprised pro-segregation Southern Democrats, bureaucrats in the newly formed industrial unions and liberal Northern politicians. In so doing, the CP betrayed the revolutionary aspirations of its members, including thousands of black workers.

As we wrote in "The CP and Black Struggles in the Depression" (*Young Spartacus* No. 25, September 1974):

> "While the CP of this period was deformed by dishonesty, political zig-zags and egregious departures from Marxism, nonetheless in the area of black work the 1930's represents the CP's heroic period. Despite the erroneous 'Black Belt' theory and the call for 'Negro self-determination' in this territory (a call which was never raised agitationally but remained part of the CP's written propaganda), the CP's work in practice combined a proletarian orientation with an awareness of the strategic need to fight racial oppression throughout all layers of American society, especially to address the problems of poor and unemployed blacks."

We reprint below an article by Cannon, originally published in the 9 April 1932 issue of the *Militant*. At that time, Trotskyists in the United States were organized as the Communist League of America (Opposition). They saw themselves as an external faction of the CP and fought to rescind their expulsions. The *Militant* article was directed toward the ranks of the CP, which contained many advanced black and white workers.

* * *

"Scottsboro"

By James P. Cannon
***Militant*, 9 April 1932**

The Scottsboro case reveals American capitalism in one of its most hideous aspects, and offers to the Communists an exceptional opportunity to deal the whole system a mighty, world-resounding blow. The deliberately planned assassination of the unfortunate Negro children is notice to the entire world that imperialist America, this pretended pacifist and friend of justice, is in fact a monster. The endeavor to thwart its bloody designs in the present case calls out the deepest and best human instincts. The words solidarity and justice acquire fresh values, they become new again in the struggle for the liberation of the helpless young Negro boys who await their fate in the Alabama jail. It is hard to think of a cause that could appeal more strongly to the hearts of the workers and all the oppressed than that of these obscure and friendless symbols of a doubly persecuted race and class.

From the revolutionary standpoint, the struggle, of course, goes far beyond the immediate objectives of the court appeals. To save the lives of the intended victims and restore their liberty is indeed our aim; but the only hope of accomplishing this is to set a really immense movement into motion. And such an achievement could have great implications for the strengthening of the Communist influence over the workers and the Negro masses. All of this is bound up together with the concrete fight for the freedom of the prisoners. To separate the one from the other, as the liberal and Socialist snivellers try to

continued on page 8

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NOTICE

***Workers Vanguard* skips an issue in December. Our next issue will be dated January 10.**

No to Anti-Immigrant, Anti-Woman "Charter of Quebec Values"!

Agence QMI photos

Rival protests in Montreal. Left: Demonstrators denounce government's bigoted, anti-Muslim Charter on September 14. Right: Pro-Charter march on September 22.

The following article originally appeared in Spartacist Canada *No. 179 (Winter 2013/2014), newspaper of our comrades of the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste.*

SPARTACIST CANADA

The Charter of Quebec Values introduced by Pauline Marois' Parti Québécois government has fuelled a wave of anti-Muslim bigotry. Cynically touted as a defense of secularism and equality between men and women, it would ban the wearing of "conspicuous" religious symbols by anyone who works in public or publicly-funded institutions—from hospitals to daycare centres, nursing homes, schools and government offices. Among those in the firing line are Jews who wear kippas and turbaned Sikhs. But the prime targets are Muslim women workers who wear the headscarf (*hijab*).

The draft law (Bill 60), formally introduced by the bourgeois-nationalist PQ on November 7, is even more draconian than the proposals announced two months earlier. Workers in private companies that do business with the government or receive a government subsidy would also be banned from wearing religious symbols, while an opt-out clause for municipalities and universities has been cut back severely. The PQ also plans to bar the tiny number of Muslim women in Quebec who wear the full-face veil (*niqab*) from *receiving* government services.

Emboldened by the PQ's moves, the bigots have crawled out from under their rocks. "I see this tension and these hateful glances directed towards us," said Badia Senouci, an Algerian-born immigrant who has lived in Quebec for 14 years. While shopping at a Quebec City mall, Senouci was accosted by another woman who, citing the Charter, demanded she remove her headscarf and change her religion. When her 18-year-old son intervened the woman spat in his face. In Saguenay, racists splattered what they claimed was pig's blood on a mosque. A middle-aged man on a Montreal bus was captured on video ranting at a *hijab*-wearing woman to remove her headscarf. Defiantly she shot back, "Marois is giving you the courage."

Bill 60 is the poisoned fruit of more than a decade of anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant witchhunting whipped up by capitalists internationally as part of their endless "war on terror." It draws direct inspiration from anti-Muslim laws now on the hooks in France and other European countries. In Quebec as elsewhere, the rulers seek to scapegoat immigrants and other minorities for the immiseration that is being visited on working people and the poor. From Paris to Athens and beyond, openly racist and even fascist forces are gaining influence as the attacks on jobs, living standards and social programs intensify.

Crass electoral calculations are also at play in Quebec. The PQ, which currently runs a minority government, wants to woo conservative francophone voters away from the rightist Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ), especially in the regions outside Montreal which have few immigrants. The Catholic church has only a shadow of its former influence in Quebec, but reactionary Catholic-inspired nationalism ("our heritage") still has traction in such areas. In 2007 the PQ lost official opposition status to the upstart right-wing nationalist Action Démocratique du Québec (now part of the CAQ) amid an earlier wave of anti-immigrant hysteria. Meanwhile, the péquistes are covering their other flank by mobilizing feminists and secular intellectuals to give the Charter a "progressive" veneer.

The Charter of Values is aimed not against the oppression of women at the hands of religion, but against *private religious beliefs*—and against the believers themselves. Marxists are atheists and fighters for women's liberation. We understand that the veil, whether worn voluntarily or under duress, is a symbol and instrument of women's oppression. At the same time, we oppose all efforts by the capitalist state to ban or restrict this and other personal religious symbols. We reject the lie that such racist and discriminatory bans have anything to do with "protecting" women or promoting the integration of immigrants. On the contrary, they can only serve to deepen the social isolation and oppression of Muslim women by driving them from the workplace and from access to public services. We say: Down with racist exclusions! No to the PQ's Bill 60!

Ottawa's Grotesque Hypocrisy

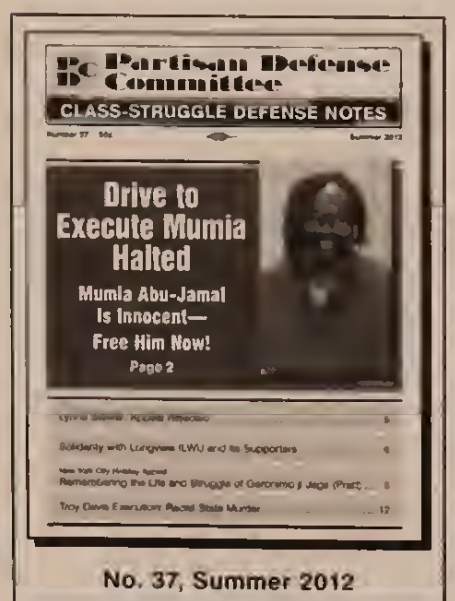
The announcement of the Charter of Values was predictably met with anti-Quebec demagogy in English Canada. From the right-wing *National Post* to the liberal *Toronto Star*, editorial pages dripped with indignation at the scourge of racism...in Quebec. Tory cabinet minister Jason Kenney railed that the PQ is playing the "politics of division by attacking minority communities." Canada, he claimed, "is a model to the world because of our pluralism, because of our tradition of unity in diversity."

This is the same Canadian government that has overseen the deportations of immigrants and refugees in unprecedented numbers. It is the same government that six years ago tried to bar women wearing the *niqab* from voting in federal elections, and two years ago banned them from taking the citizenship oath. Shameless hypocrisy has always been a hallmark of the Canadian ruling class, whose state was built on the destruction of aboriginal societies and the forcible suppression of the national rights of the francophone Québécois.

The English Canadian rulers portray Quebec nationalism as uniquely xenophobic and intolerant—a truly brazen charge considering Ottawa's own record of witchhunting Muslims under the "war on terror." From Canada's full participation in the bloody occupation of Afghanistan to helping to deliver Maher Arar to his Syrian torturers at the behest of Washington, their ongoing campaign of frame-ups, detentions and "no-fly" lists is a sustained assault on the rights of everyone.

Nationalism, Secularism and the Quiet Revolution

For their part, the PQ nationalists are cynically manipulating the broad support for secularism and women's rights in Quebec in the service of racist reaction. Introducing Bill 60 in the National Assembly, PQ cabinet minister Bernard Drainville



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claimed outrageously that "the Charter of Values will be a source of harmony and cohesion for Quebec," adding: "It is part of the process of secularization that began with the Quiet Revolution."

In the late 19th century, American novelist Mark Twain described Montreal as a town where "you couldn't throw a brick without breaking a church window." The Catholic church exercised an iron grip on francophone Quebec well into the next century, controlling social institutions from hospitals to schools, all with the support of the anglophone capitalists. Under Maurice Duplessis, who ran Quebec for nearly two decades until 1959, clerical dominance was reinforced by naked state repression. But Quebec's "Great Darkness," as it is still known, was shattered in the 1960s through deepgoing social struggle.

The so-called Quiet Revolution, which was fuelled in large part by opposition to national oppression, did throw off Quebec's clerical shackles, to the immense benefit of women in particular. It was also a period of sharp ***class*** struggles which saw the advance of a highly organized and combative Québécois labour movement. These struggles peaked with the April-May 1972 general strike, when workers took over entire industrial towns. But the militant labour movement became subordinated to a newly emergent francophone bourgeoisie that gradually displaced the former Anglo overlords.

The federal government met the rise of struggle in Quebec with repression, highlighted by the military occupation of Montreal during the 1970 "October Crisis." For their part, the English Canadian labour misleaders and the NDP social democrats were hostile to the aspirations of the Québécois workers, and their "united Canada" chauvinism served to drive the Quebec working class into the arms of its "own" national capitalists. The Quebec labour bureaucrats soon began to call for support to the PQ, which formed its first government in 1976. By the end of that decade, the period of labour and social radicalism in Quebec had come to an end. For more than three decades now, the PQ nationalists have alternated with the federalist Liberal Party in administering capitalism in Quebec, including through harsh austerity attacks against the workers.

Nationalism and chauvinism inevitably foster racism against immigrants and ethnic minorities. To go forward in their struggles against the ravages of the capitalist profit system, the working people must be united across national, racial and ethnic lines. But the working class in this country is, and has long been, ***divided*** along national lines, profoundly undermining its ability to wage such struggles. For this reason, we Marxists advocate independence for Quebec. By taking the national question off the agenda, this would create far better conditions for the workers to see that their real enemies are their own respective capitalist exploiters—not the workers of the other nation or ethnic and religious minorities.

Feminism and Anti-Muslim Hysteria

One left-wing Quebec blogger aptly characterized the PQ Charter as an "Islamophobic hydra disguised as a secular Prince Charming and a feminist Sleeping Beauty" (marcbonhomme.com, 28 October). Its provisions have led to sharp divides among bourgeois nationalists, in the unions and in Quebec's influential feminist milieu.

Former PQ premiers Lucien Bouchard and Jacques Parizeau both criticized the Charter. The only remaining Bloc Québécois MP [Member of Parliament] from Montreal, Maria Mourani, was expelled from the Bloc caucus for publicly opposing it. In the labour movement, the SFPQ public-sector union quickly endorsed the PQ legislation, while the Fédération Autonome de l'Enseignement (FAE), which represents about a third of Quebec teachers, denounced it. FAE president Sylvain Mallette told the press: "We won't go on a witch hunt to see who wears a hijab, kippa or cross.... We will defend the right of our members to work."

Montreal has seen rival, near-weekly demonstrations for and against the Charter. The largest anti-Charter protest drew at least 10,000, chiefly Muslims, into the streets on September 14. Six weeks later, a "March of the Janettes"—named for pioneer feminist, author and TV personality Janette Bertrand, now in her 80s—brought out a similar number of Charter supporters. Waving Quebec flags, the crowd broke out into the unofficial nationalist anthem, *Gens du Pays*. Among the rally organizers were Martine Desjardins, a leader of last year's student strike, and media personality Julie Snyder, the wife of Pierre Karl Péladeau, the notorious union-busting former CEO of Quebecor and Sun Media. Earlier this year, the PQ government appointed Péladeau to head Hydro-Québec, the iconic nationalized energy company, and he now sits in on select cabinet meetings.

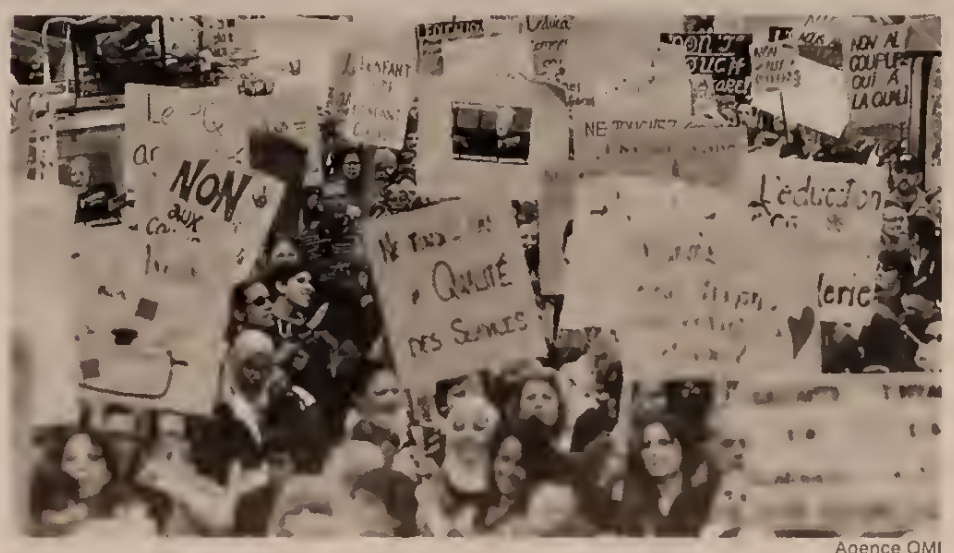
Quebec's main feminist group, the Fédération des Femmes du Québec (FFQ—Quebec Federation of Women), says it "vigorously" opposes banning women wearing religious garb from government jobs. But the FFQ makes a notable exception for fully-veiled women who, it says, should be banned because their *niqabs* and *burqas* "hinder communication." The feminist sisterhood may be powerful, as the old saying goes, but it doesn't embrace fully veiled Muslim women. Indeed, a streak of anti-immigrant demagogy has long been present in the Quebec feminist movement. Witness Lise Payette, the former PQ cabinet minister for the status of women. In her later career as a screenwriter, Payette was notorious for the 1989 documentary *Disparaître* (Disappearing), which railed against the "threat" to Quebec society posed by immigrants.

It could not be clearer that feminism cannot show the way to women's emancipation. For feminism, which is a bourgeois ideology, the basic division in society is not class against class, but men against women. Feminism is not premised on the destruction of the capitalist system that is the main source of women's oppression today. Indeed, the goal of many feminists is nothing more than to advance a layer of women into the boardrooms and the upper reaches of academia and the media. Despite important gains like abortion rights and formal legal equality, the secular ***bourgeois*** Quebec that emerged from the Quiet Revolution remains a ruthlessly exploitative society that offers no road to the liberation of women (or anyone else).

Moreover, the PQ's pretenses to secularism and women's rights are paper thin. Explicitly ***not*** banned under the Charter are "emblematic and toponymic elements of Quebec's cultural heritage," i.e., the huge crosses and other Catholic symbols that adorn public buildings all over Quebec. Tax breaks to religious groups and state funding for private religious schools go untouched, but the law would explicitly "allow physicians and pharmacists to refrain from recommending or providing professional services because of their personal convictions." The PQ inveighs against the "threat" of a woman wearing a headscarf serving lunch to kids in a daycare centre, but a Christian bigot behind the counter in a pharmacy or medical clinic would be free—on religious grounds—to refuse to prescribe the pill or sell you a condom.

Marxism and Religious Reaction

As we wrote in "Down With Quebec's Niqab Ban!" (*SC* No. 165, Summer 2010): "The danger to women's rights comes not from a tiny, vulnerable Muslim minority, but from the rule of the bourgeoisie, which upholds the reactionary institution of the family, the central force that oppresses women the world over. The family is the vehicle for transmitting property from one generation to the next, and the mechanism for raising new generations of workers." The oppression of women originates in class society, and can only be ended by overthrowing capitalist class rule. The family unit cannot simply be abolished: its functions must be replaced with socialized childcare and housework in an egalitarian socialist society.



Agence QMI

Montreal, May 2013: Protest by striking day-care workers and others against budget cuts by PQ government.

Since the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union—the world's first workers state, created through the October 1917 workers revolution in Russia—there has been a sharp rise of all kinds of religious fundamentalism. Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism: all are variants of "the opium of the people," as Karl Marx characterized religion 170 years ago. The growth of this false consciousness among the poor and downtrodden is rooted in despair and the lie that the struggle for an egalitarian socialist future is no longer possible.

Every modern religion is an instrument of reaction that befuddles the working people. But the increased prevalence of the veil today is also a result of the relentless poverty and discrimination suffered by Muslim immigrants and their descendants in Canada and other imperialist countries. Young immigrant and minority women are trapped between the racism of these societies and rigid, oppressive family structures.

All the parties of the capitalist class, federalist and sovereignist alike, necessarily promote racism against such minorities, because "divide and rule" policies are necessary to a social system based on the grinding exploitation of the working class. We Marxists fight for the voluntary integration of all minorities based on full equality. But we understand that eradicating racism, women's oppression and all forms of discrimination requires a revolutionary struggle, mobilizing the social power of the working class to put an end to capitalist exploitation and liberate humanity from poverty and want.

Québec Solidaire: Fifth Wheel of the Bourgeois PQ

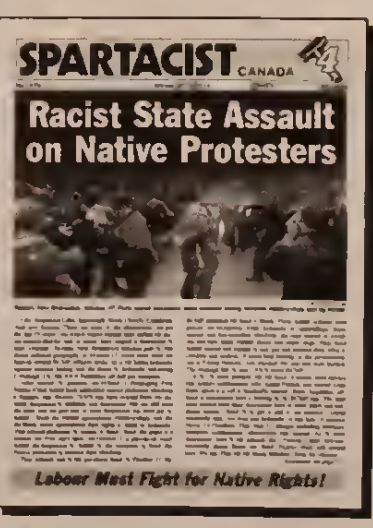
This perspective is light years from that of Québec Solidaire (QS), the petty-bourgeois nationalist party that is backed by most of Quebec's reformist left. In the build-up to last year's provincial election, QS leader Françoise David offered to prop up a minority PQ government in the National Assembly. More recently, QS spokesmen have provided cover for the PQ's turn to open anti-immigrant bigotry, affirming that they "welcome favourably" various proposals in the Charter and seek "honourable compromises."

In October, QS launched its own "Charter of Secularism." While dumping many of the overtly racist restrictions on the wearing of religious symbols, it would keep intact the ban on public services for women wearing the *niqab*. This is consistent with QS's stance when the then-Liberal government sought to implement a similar ban in Quebec in 2010. QS deputy Amir Khadir also voted to support a PQ motion banning Sikhs wearing the kirpan (a small ceremonial religious dagger) from entering the National Assembly to speak against the proposed Liberal bill.

Several of the reformist outfits who have made themselves a home inside Québec Solidaire (*La Riposte*/Fightback, Gauche Socialiste, etc.) have issued statements opposing the PQ Charter. *La Riposte* claims, nonetheless, that the Charter is no big deal: it "will ultimately be toothless" and "have little real effect in Quebec" (marxiste.qc.ca, 24 September). For Gauche Socialiste, which has long prayed at the altar of petty-bourgeois Quebec nationalism, the main problem is the PQ's "incapacity to win a majority of the Québécois people to the perspective of independence" (pressegauche.org, 27 August). The English Canadian cothinkers of these groups support the NDP, long a flagrant opponent of Quebec's national rights. For these reformists, the only consistency is political opportunism: tailing after whatever appears to be popular. This has nothing in common with the Marxist fight for revolutionary leadership.

The persecution of Muslim women, who are among the most oppressed in today's capitalist society, is poison to working-class struggle. Muslims and other minorities make up a growing part of the working class in Montreal as well as other cities in Canada. Victory over the ruling exploiters requires the unity of the working class against racist demagogy in all its forms. That means opposing the PQ's reactionary Bill 60 (and its little brother, QS's Charter of Secularism) as well as all of the capitalists' anti-immigrant laws, and fighting for full citizenship rights for all immigrants.

The Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste is fighting to build the nucleus of a binational revolutionary workers party. Acting as a tribune of all the oppressed, such a party would seek to draw behind it women, youth and oppressed minorities in the fight for emancipation from the capitalist system. It can only be forged through an intransigent political struggle to break the working class from its current chauvinist and nationalist misleaders, in English Canada and Quebec alike. Only through proletarian socialist revolution on an international scale can we begin to build a society free of hunger, war and racism; a world where men and women will no longer need to take refuge in religious fantasies to escape the harsh realities of a capitalist society rooted in misery and oppression. ■



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China...

(continued from page 1)

radioing ahead or registering their radio frequencies. This provocation served to test China's response and demonstrate U.S. capacity for airborne attacks from Guam. According to Chinese defense ministry reports, ten Japanese early warning, reconnaissance and fighter planes as well as South Korean planes also made unannounced overflights.

While refusing to recognize the ADIZ, the U.S. has advised commercial airlines to notify Chinese authorities of flight plans over the East China Sea "for safety reasons." This posture should not blind anyone to the danger posed by Washington's determination to "roll back Communism." On 1 September 1983, the U.S. sent more than 200 passengers on Korean Airlines Flight 007 to their deaths when it directed the aircraft to pass over sensitive Soviet military installations in order to trigger and then monitor the USSR's air defenses. After the pilots of the aircraft, which appeared to the Soviets to be a warplane, refused requests to identify themselves or to land, it was shot down.

U.S. imperialism has dominated the Pacific since its defeat of Japan in World War II, a conquest sealed with the incineration of 200,000 Japanese civilians in the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. That atrocity was intended to send a message to the Soviet Union about who ran the world. The destruction of the USSR by capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92—a historic defeat prepared by decades of imperialist economic and military pressure as well as internal Stalinist misrule—removed what had been the U.S.'s supreme military target and the most substantial counterweight to its aim of world domination.

China, the most powerful country remaining where capitalist rule was overthrown, then became the central target of the imperialists' counterrevolutionary machinations. In March 1996, the Clinton White House positioned two aircraft carrier groups in the Taiwan Strait that separates mainland China from capitalist Taiwan. In April 2001, under George W. Bush, a U.S. spy plane flying just off China's Hainan Island collided with a Chinese fighter jet. Subsequently, the "war on terror" served to distract Washington from its main focus on China.

Since 2010, the U.S. has been moving battleships and aircraft carriers to the Far East, signing military pacts and carrying out joint exercises in the name of the "pivot toward Asia," a top priority of the Obama administration. Among other things, the pivot poses a challenge to China's access to the Pacific Ocean. In the service of this shift, the White House has eased some of the punishing economic sanctions against Iran in return for an agreement by that country's new regime to freeze its nuclear development program. At the same time, Washington has found no small amount of difficulty in extricating itself from its quagmires in the Muslim world, from Afghanistan to the Near East.

U.S. Air Force

Reuters

U.S. B-52 bomber taking off from Guam Air Force base, July 2. Japanese Coast Guard and Chinese marine surveillance vessels near one of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, July 1.

Although the rulers of U.S. and Japanese imperialism have their own distinct and competing interests, they are aligned behind the goal of destroying the workers state that emerged out of the 1949 Chinese Revolution. Despite its deformation by the rule of a parasitic bureaucracy, that state provides an obstacle to imperialist domination, shielding the country from the full impact of the capitalist world market and allowing for explosive though uneven industrial development. The Chinese workers state must be defended against the imperialists, who aim to return the country to its prerevolutionary status as the supine victim of their depredations, and against the domestic counterrevolutionary forces they promote and support.

For acceding to the demand that flight plans covering the East China Sea be communicated to China, the U.S. incurred criticism from elements of the more bellicose Japanese bourgeoisie as well as its South Korean counterpart. Both Tokyo and Seoul have pressured their domestic airlines to stop informing China of such flight plans. Actually, the U.S. position reflects the strategy of combining military pressure with further economic penetration of the Chinese mainland, as displayed during Vice President Joe Biden's recent meeting with Chinese president Xi Jinping.

In order to gain access to foreign capital, resources and markets, the Beijing Stalinist bureaucracy has acted as labor brokers for capitalists around the world, offering up Chinese workers for exploitation in designated sectors of the economy. The "socialist market economy" has also fostered a nascent capitalist class and other counterrevolutionary forces within the country, with yawning social inequality as well as a sharp rise in workers struggles accompanying economic growth.

Despite these inroads, China today is not capitalist. It continues to be ruled by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) apparatus that emerged from the peasant-based 1949 Revolution, which smashed bourgeois rule. Heavy industry, the land and the core of the financial system continue to be held as collectivized state property. Capitalist counterrevolution would be an enormous defeat not only for the Chinese workers and peasants but for working people around the world, who would be confronted by a strengthened and emboldened imperialist class enemy.

Robber Barons' Alliance

The U.S.-Japanese military alliance, hatched after World War II as a key part of the anti-Soviet Cold War, remains crucial to American interests in Asia. Reaffirming the alliance, an October 3 joint security statement recognized the U.S.'s "commitment to the security of Japan through the full range of U.S. military capabilities, including nuclear and conventional" and projected "expanding security and defense cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond." A major component of this alliance continues to be the U.S. military presence in Okinawa.

Over the past two decades, there has been a loosening of some of the restraints on the overseas deployment of Japanese military forces that are codified in Article Nine of the country's Constitution. As our comrades of the Spartacist Group Japan noted: "With memories of the slaughter of tens of millions by Japan's imperial army during the Pacific War still very much alive, it is only through its alliance with Washington that Japanese imperialism has been able to deploy its already highly advanced military overseas" ("Down With Japanese Provocations Against China, North Korea!" *WV* No. 842, 18 February 2005).

Under the hawkish government of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, the Japanese imperialists are accelerating their rearmament drive, recently announcing plans to deploy more F-15s, radar planes and a new helicopter carrier and to build a new army base on an island in the East China Sea by 2016. With China already deploying drones, Japan is also considering buying American drones to patrol the area. As Tania Branigan reported in the London *Guardian* (27 November), China's establishment of an ADIZ was "a response to Japan's extension of its own zone this spring and its recent warning that it was willing to shoot down unmanned drones it regarded as a threat to its airspace."

Japan's ADIZ was established by the U.S. when it occupied the country after WWII. Similarly, South Korea's ADIZ was declared by the U.S. in 1951, during the Korean War against the North Korean Communist regime and Mao's China. Both these zones overlap with the one China recently declared, with Japan's running less than 150 kilometers (95 miles) from the Chinese coast in some places. And now South Korea has expanded its ADIZ further over the East China Sea, also jutting into the zone declared by Japan, Korea's former colonial overlord.

China's ADIZ includes airspace over the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands, a chain of rocky, uninhabited outcrops claimed by both Japan and China, and an underwater reef—called Ieodo in Korean and Suyan Rock in Chinese—on which South Korea has built a research station and a heliport. While the U.S. claims to have no position on Senkaku/Diaoyu sovereignty, American spokesmen have made clear that the pact with Japan covers any military clashes over the territory.

In general, the question of the ownership of these uninhabited rocks and islets does not in itself pose defense of the Chinese deformed workers state. However, it is crucial for the international proletariat—particularly in Japan and the U.S.—to oppose imperialist provocations over this territory and, in the case of military attack on China, to stand for defense of the workers state. As Trotskyists, our defense of China in the military sense is not conditional on whatever policies the CCP bureaucracy may pursue.

Japan's claim of ownership of the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands dates back to its military victory over China in 1895, when as a rising imperialist power it seized Taiwan (Formosa) and extracted other concessions from the moribund Manchu dynasty. In the dispute over the islands, the CCP has been able to tap the deep popular reservoir of anti-Japanese feeling in China, which is fed mainly by memories of the horrors of Japanese imperialist occupation beginning in the 1930s. It took the 1949 social revolution to break the chains of Western and Japanese imperialism.

However, the CCP regime from Mao Zedong's time to today has been defined by the narrow nationalism inherent in the Stalinist dogma of "building socialism in one country"—a grotesque perversion of the communist program of world proletarian revolution. In fomenting nationalist opposition to Japan, the CCP drives a wedge between the Chinese workers and peasants and their potential allies in the Japanese, South Korean and other working classes of the region. The bureaucracy's nationalism also obliterates the *class* divide between the People's Republic of China and capitalist Taiwan, whose bourgeois rulers have been courted by Beijing in the effort to catapult China to the status of a world power.

Another criminal expression of Stalinist nationalism is the wrangling between the Chinese and Vietnamese workers states over fishing and mineral exploration rights in the South China Sea. Outright military clashes between the two erupted in 1988 and 2011, in addition to smaller police actions as when the Chinese Navy shot and killed nine Vietnamese fishermen in the Gulf of Tonkin in 2005. Hostilities between the Chinese and Vietnamese regimes provide an opening for imperialist maneuvers and pose a direct danger to both workers states, particularly with the U.S. seizing on the rivalry to secure Vietnam as an ally against China (see "Stirring Up the South China Sea—U.S. Imperialism Tightens Military Vise on China," *WV* No. 1005, 6 July 2012).

Typhoon Haiyan and Imperialist Machinations

In another move aimed clearly at squeezing China, the U.S. and Japan seized on Typhoon Haiyan's devastation of the Philippines to enhance their military presence in contested areas of the South China Sea. The U.S. deployed an aircraft carrier group, marines and surveillance planes, while Japan sent up to 1,000 troops and three warships.

The Philippines, a dependent country long under the thumb of the U.S., is a key

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Food Stamps...

(continued from page 1)

26 November). When the housing market crashed, sparking the recession, mortgage foreclosures swept the nation, causing ten million largely working-class families to lose their homes. Today, an additional 2.3 million are at risk. One measure of the spread of homelessness over the last five years is the 72 percent nationwide increase in the public school enrollment of children without a residence. Fully one in five children in the U.S. lives in poverty.

Two Democratic Party city councilmen in Los Angeles are plumbing the depths of official abuse by proposing a ban on publicly feeding the homeless, a measure already enacted or under consideration in over 30 cities, including Philadelphia, Seattle and Orlando. Earlier this year, L.A. had sought legal sanction for its police force to seize and destroy the scant personal belongings of those on skid row. In many black-majority cities like Baltimore and Detroit, where poverty and homelessness abound, authorities are demolishing neighborhoods or letting them burn rather than invest in maintaining and restoring housing stock.

The devastation of bankrupt Detroit is a testament to the brutal workings of capitalism, as the auto giants first recruited labor, including many black workers, to toil on the assembly line only to then toss them on the scrap heap when the plants were no longer as profitable. Widely hailed for having "saved" the Big Three by showering tens of billions on the auto bosses (not to mention trillions on the banks), the Wall Street Democrat Obama again has turned his back on the desperate black masses amid the city's bankruptcy proceedings. Following the recent court ruling that gave the green light to wiping out city workers' pensions, other government bodies are lining up to do the same. Two days after the ruling, Illinois Democratic governor Pat Quinn signed a bill that stripped away retirement benefits from hundreds of thousands of teachers, nurses and other workers. While the ax-wielders scream about "underfunded" and "mismanaged" pension benefits, Wall Street has for years been looting retirement funds. The message from the bosses is clear enough: work hard, starve and die.

The inability of the richest imperialist power on the planet to provide the necessities of life to the producers of its incredible wealth is a searing indictment of the system of production for profit. This country has the resources to provide well-paying jobs, healthy diets and quality medical care, housing and education for everyone who lives here. But to provide these necessities requires that the rule of the rapacious capitalist class be overthrown by a proletarian socialist revolution.

"Let Them Eat Cake"

The modern food stamp program has its roots in Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal. Enacted following U.S. capitalism's most serious crash in 1929, the New Deal served to stave off the growing radicalization and militant labor struggles of the 1930s. The precursor to SNAP was introduced in the 1933 Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA), the first farm bill. Although farming has undergone a great transformation in the U.S. from the time of the Great Depression with the virtual disappearance of family farms, the main purpose of the farm bill has remained unchanged: maintaining high prices for agricultural products.

Under the AAA, the government paid farmers to not grow food on a percentage of their land and purchased "excess" crops. The government to this day heavily subsidizes grains, oilseeds, cotton, sugar and dairy products. The money for these subsidies has always far outstripped the sums dedicated to providing food for the poor.

In the AAA's first year, ten million acres of cotton were destroyed, six million pigs were killed and vast amounts of milk were poured down the sewers in an attempt to stabilize the market. That the bourgeoisie would pursue these measures at the height of a worldwide depression speaks volumes to the irrationality of capitalist production. At a time when many American children were suffering from diseases caused by malnutrition, food stamps and soon thereafter the school lunch program represented a more politically expedient means of disposing of "excess" supply.

The impact of the AAA was especially pernicious in the rural South, where sharecropping and tenancy formed the labor backbone of agriculture. In lieu of wages, the sharecropper worked for a portion of the cash crop as well as a food allowance and other necessities. The tenant farmer paid a share of the crop as rent on the land worked. Government subsidies induced white landlords not to farm, which left black tenants and sharecroppers to starve. Countless poor black and white families were driven off the land and into extreme misery as a result of the New Deal of the Democrats.

AP

New York City, November 2013: A homeless man sleeps under a 5th Avenue store's holiday display.

In later decades, farm bills would help catapult U.S. agribusiness into becoming the dominant global food supplier. Massive government assistance to farm interests and its enormous grain reserves were deployed to manipulate the world grain market and put the competition out of business. Food production in neocolonial countries was upended, as a wide swath of the world became almost wholly dependent on U.S. agricultural imports. The persistence of starvation as a condition of a large portion of humanity makes clear that under capitalism food is distributed not according to need but according to the ability to pay.

Meanwhile, farm subsidies have padded the accounts of a number of billionaires, among them Charles Schwab and David Rockefeller Sr. Ken Cook, head of the watchdog Environmental Working Group, noted in *A Place at the Table* (2013): "Taxpayers shelled out more than a quarter of a trillion dollars for various federal farm subsidies between 1995 and 2010. But to characterize this staggering sum as a big government bailout or welfare would be manifestly unfair—to bailouts and welfare." He adds: "To be clear, the US Department of Agriculture has cracked down on one nagging problem with absentee owners in recent years: the USDA assures Congress that almost none of the subsidies paid to dead farmers are improper."

In contrast, fruits and vegetables for the living are often hard to come by. Not a single supermarket dots the eight-square-mile landscape of the black neighborhood of West Oakland, California, home to over 30,000 people. Such considerations do not register for moralizing bourgeois spokesmen who blame malnutrition and obesity among the poor on "lifestyle choices." To much fanfare, in 2010 the Obama administration pushed through the "Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act," supposedly to improve the quality of food in school lunches. Not only was this measure stripped of any meaningful funding; the money spent on it was taken directly out of SNAP.

The original food stamp program and its revival in 1964 by President Lyndon B. Johnson as part of his "Great Society" offerings were sops in response to social upheaval. Today, with the dearth

continued on page 8

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theater in the imperialist military encirclement of China, as underscored by joint U.S.-Philippine military exercises conducted earlier this year near the disputed Scarborough Shoal. Following China's deployment of its one aircraft carrier to the area on November 26, the Philippines appealed to the United Nations to press its claim to these lumps of rock. Beijing's declaration that it will not abide by a UN resolution on the matter is notable. The same Stalinist regime has criminally contributed its own armed forces for several "peacekeeping" operations conducted by the UN on the imperialists' behalf far from its own shores.

In seeking to tighten the military vise on China, Washington has resumed aid to special forces in Indonesia, restored diplomatic relations with Myanmar (Burma) and stationed marines in Darwin, Australia. The capitalist regime in South Korea is building a new naval base for 20 warships, ostensibly to protect shipping lanes in the East China Sea for its exports. Behind South Korea's rulers stands a U.S. military presence that dates back to the 1950-53 Korean War. To maintain the 28,500 U.S. troops stationed there today, the American military has launched an $11 billion project to modernize its aging bases, described by U.S. officials as the biggest military construction effort since the digging of the Panama Canal.

Taiwan, which sent C-130 military transports into the Philippines after the typhoon, has recently received dozens of patrol aircraft and Apache helicopters from the U.S. Ruled by the Chinese bourgeoisie who fled the 1949 Revolution, Taiwan has been viewed by Washington as an "unsinkable aircraft carrier" for use against "Red China" ever since 1950, when the U.S. Seventh Fleet occupied the waters between Taiwan and the Chinese mainland. Counterposed to the CCP's program of uniting with Taiwan on the basis of "one country, two systems"—i.e., maintaining Taiwan's capitalist property relations—Trotskyists call for revolutionary reunification through proletarian political revolution on the mainland to oust the CCP bureaucracy and social revolution on the island.

China and the Capitalist World Economy

For Marxists, the increased development of Chinese military capacity, including nuclear capacity, is a welcome development. This has been achieved in part while U.S. forces were bogged down in the bloody occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. Although the September 11 terror attacks diverted the U.S.'s attention to Afghanistan and Iraq, the concocted "war on terror" also served to strengthen the imperialists' military arc around China, with military bases placed in Central Asia and military agreements struck with neighboring countries. China's Stalinist leaders undercut defense of the workers state by endorsing the "anti-terror" campaign.

As one of the largest holders of U.S. government debt, Beijing has also helped to finance the arms buildup directed against China. While this financial relationship induces a certain delicacy in Washington's posture toward the Chinese leadership, the flare-ups over the East and South China Seas show that it by no means secures the workers state from imperialist maneuvering and military aggression. The Beijing Stalinists' perspective of offsetting imperialist hostility through diplomatic appeasement and greater trade ties is premised on the illusion that China can steadily develop economically and militarily within the framework of a world dominated by imperialism. In that effort, Xi Jinping discussed with Biden continuing economic sanctions and military pressure to halt North Korea's nuclear weapons program. The result of such betrayal would be both the further weakening of that deformed workers state and the tightening of the imperialist squeeze on China.

To counteract Beijing's growing economic and diplomatic clout, the U.S. has been pursuing trade deals in the region to exclude China and secure markets for its own industries. The U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement, which went into effect in March 2012, is one of more than 20 such pacts in existence. The proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership, which the U.S. is currently negotiating with numerous countries on the Pacific Rim, including Japan and Australia, excludes China. In the course of the current anti-China furor, South Korea has declared its intention to sign up.

With the global market dominated by the advanced capitalist powers, there is no way for China or the other deformed workers states to develop socialism or to secure lasting peace. Achieving socialism is contingent on material abundance. This goal requires the revolutionary seizure of power by the proletariat on an international scale, crucially within advanced capitalist countries such as the U.S. and Japan. Such a perspective guided the Bolsheviks, who led the October 1917 Russian Revolution.

In *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936), his classic analysis of the degeneration of the Soviet Union under Stalin, Trotsky noted both the advantages of a collectivized economy in mobilizing industry for military defense and the limitations that sprang from the isolation of the workers state. He wrote:

> "Who shall prevail—not only as a military, but still more as an economic question—confronts the Soviet Union on a world scale. Military intervention is a danger. The intervention of cheap commodities in the baggage trains of capitalist armies would be incomparably more dangerous."

Ultimately, either the combative Chinese proletariat will overthrow the bureaucracy and establish a regime based on revolutionary internationalism and workers democracy, or the bureaucracy will open the way for the destruction of the workers state, as it did in the former Soviet Union. Counterrevolution in the USSR brought nothing but disaster for working people; life expectancy plummeted as millions were thrown into dire poverty and previously guaranteed jobs and services disappeared. Meanwhile, Russia became the land of a few mega-rich oligarchs who plundered the country's formerly collectivized economy.

Key to defending and extending the gains of the Chinese Revolution is the fight against the imperialist rulers in their own homelands. Together with our comrades in Japan, the Spartacist League/U.S. stands for smashing the counterrevolutionary alliance between Japanese and U.S. imperialism through workers revolution on both sides of the Pacific. Victory for the working people in these struggles requires the forging of Leninist-Trotskyist parties as sections of a revolutionary international. ■

Scottsboro...

(continued from page 3)

do, would only make the sacrifice of the prisoners doubly certain.

The problem consists primarily in the mobilization of the white workers for the fight. In our opinion it is incorrect to view the Scottsboro case as a "Negro issue"; it is wrong to direct the main agitation toward the Negro people and concrete the organization work around them, including their churches and lodges. Such a tactic will not be able to arouse a movement of the necessary breadth and power. And, moreover, it will fail even to make the desired impression on the Negro people.

There is no doubt that the Negro masses burn with indignation at the Scottsboro outrage and suffer their own thousand-fold wrongs again in sympathy with the prisoners. But along with that they cannot help being conscious of their position as a bopeless racial minority. What they need to inspire them for struggle is the prospect, or at least the hope, of victory. Direct agitation alone will never suffice for this. The sight of a significant movement of white workers fighting on their side is the agitator that will really move the Negroes and make them accessible to the Communist organizers of that movement.

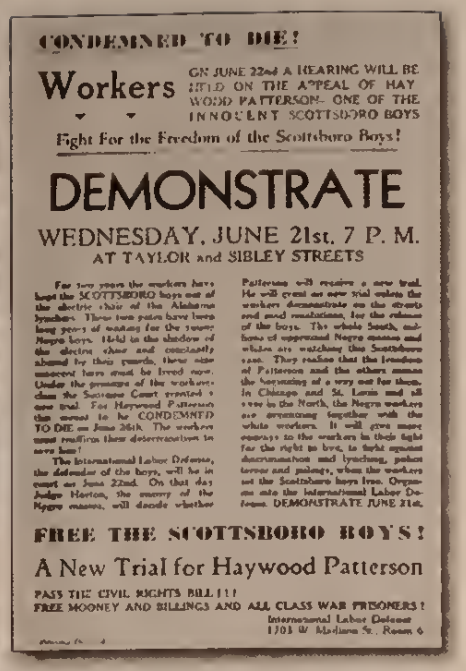
The central problem of the Scottsboro defense movement is the organization of the white workers for the fight. Once a good start is made along this line, the enlistment of huge Negro contingents in the common struggle will be a comparatively simple matter. In this question, as in every important undertaking in the class struggle, the trade union movement exhibits its decisive importance. The trade unions ought to be alive at this moment with Communist agitation on the Scottsboro case. Here is an unexampled opportunity to explain to the organized workers the necessity of solidarity with their black brothers, and to dramatize the argument with the monstrous story of Scottsboro.

Assuming a Communist Party that knows how to work in the trade unions, a big response can be expected from this agitation. The sympathies of the organized workers can be quickly crystallized into a network of conferences. The movement of the unions in this direction will give a tremendous impetus to the propaganda among the Negroes; they will join in the movement with enthusiasm and hope. The concrete demonstrations of white and Negro solidarity, ominously foreshadowing their coming union in the revolution, will impress the judicial hirelings more than a thousand lawyers' briefs; will make them pause and weigh the possible consequences of their murders. The Communists, as the organizers and leaders of the unprecedented demonstration, as the loyal and capable champions of the most oppressed and persecuted, will gain an enormous prestige.

In such a perspective there is nothing fantastic. It assumes merely an active Communist Party which understands the essence of the Negro question, which applies the tactic of the united front, and has not isolated itself from the trade union movement. Even in the present situation the deficiencies can be made up by a timely correction of policy. The best way to serve the Scottsboro case is to press for this. ■

Labor Defender

Mass mobilizations initiated by the ILD were key in saving the Scottsboro Nine from legal lynching.



CONDEMNED TO DIE!

Workers ON JUNE 22nd A HEARING WILL BE HELD ON THE APPEAL OF HAYWOOD PATTERSON- ONE OF THE INNOCENT SCOTTSBORO BOYS

Fight For the Freedom of the Scottsboro Boys!

DEMONSTRATE

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21st, 7 P. M.
AT TAYLOR and SIBLEY STREETS

For two years the workers have kept the SCOTTSBORO boys out of the electric chair at the Alabama lynchers. These two years have been long years of waiting for the young Negro boys, held in the shadow of the electric chair and constantly shamed by their guards, these nine innocent boys must be freed now. Under the pressure of the workers class the Supreme Court granted a new trial. For Haywood Patterson the arrest is to be CONDEMNED TO DIE on June 26th. The workers must reaffirm their determination to save him!

The International Labor Defense, the defender of the boys, will be in court on June 22nd. On that day Judge Horton, the enemy of the Negro masses, will decide whether Patterson will receive a new trial. He will grant no new trial unless the workers demonstrate on the streets and send resolutions for the release of the boys. The whole South, and home of oppressed Negro masses and whites are watching the Scottsboro case. They realize that the freedom of Patterson and the others means the beginning of a way out for them. In Chicago and St. Louis and all over in the North, the Negro workers are organizing together with the white workers. It will give more courage to the workers in their fight for the right to live, to fight against discrimination and lynching, police terror and pulings, when the workers set the Scottsboro boys free. Organize into the International Labor Defense. DEMONSTRATE JUNE 21st.

FREE THE SCOTTSBORO BOYS!

A New Trial for Haywood Patterson

PASS THE CIVIL RIGHTS BILL!!!
FREE MOONEY AND BILLINGS AND ALL CLASS WAR PRISONERS!

International Labor Defense
1701 W Madison St., Room 6

Food Stamps...

(continued from page 7)

of class struggle, the capitalists are content to just cast aside those who cannot be put to work. The current House farm bill includes a 20-hour weekly work requirement for receipt of food stamps. Republican majority leader Eric Cantor drew a straight line between this proposal and the welfare "reform" of the 1990s—the attacks under Democratic president Clinton that "ended welfare as we know it" and introduced workfare. That scheme forced people to take jobs, often substituting for unionized workers, to get their welfare checks. What is needed is a fight to organize workfare recipients into the unions as part of broader struggle in the interests of the working and poor masses.

A major force among today's Republicans is the neo-Confederates of the Tea Party. These racist yahoos are part of a long tradition of bourgeois demagogues railing to ax social programs portrayed as a redistribution of income from hard-working folks to "undeserving" blacks and immigrants. More than a few Tea Party supporters have expressed a willingness to forego such benefits themselves to spite the black masses. The black population, which constitutes an oppressed race-color caste overwhelmingly segregated at the bottom of this society, would be hard hit by the shredding of what remains of the social safety net.

Expropriate the Expropriators!

The prolonged wage squeeze has sparked some fightback from working people. On Black Friday, protesters gathered at 1,500 Wal-Mart stores to demand at least $25,000 annually for full-time employees. Some 110 people were arrested nationwide. The week after the OUR Wal-Mart protests, workers at fast-food outlets across the country held brief walkouts to rally for higher wages. Most minimum-wage workers are employed in retail or food service. As one measure of how paltry wages have become, a Congressional report in May estimated that a single 300-employee Wal-Mart Supercenter costs anywhere from $904,542 to nearly $1.75 million per year in supplemental government assistance for the workforce.

A major backer of the "Fight for 15" campaign, which seeks a doubling of the federal minimum wage to $15 an hour, is the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). Although Fight for 15 has attracted combative workers, for the SEIU tops it is a public relations ploy to leverage the Democratic Party into supporting a slight minimum wage increase. For decades, the labor movement has been stifled by a leadership that ties workers to the capitalist system, largely through preaching reliance on the Democratic Party. This strategy has provided less cover than an umbrella with holes for the anti-union onslaught on the working class.

Take the 2009 bailout of the auto industry orchestrated by Obama. It was all about making the members of the once mighty United Auto Workers (UAW) "work for less" —or not at all—to restore the profitability of the companies. With the complicity of the class-collaborationist UAW bureaucrats, it did just that. Today the starting wage at a General Motors plant is $16 an hour, far less than it had been, helping fuel wage-gouging throughout the economy.

Any increase in the minimum wage is long overdue. Obama and his Labor Secretary, Thomas Perez, have made noises in favor of $10 an hour, safe in the knowledge that the measure will never get through Congress. Some states and local jurisdictions have recently voted to increase the minimum wage in order to get more money circulating in area economies. But these increases and the others being proposed are a pittance compared to the actual needs of working people.

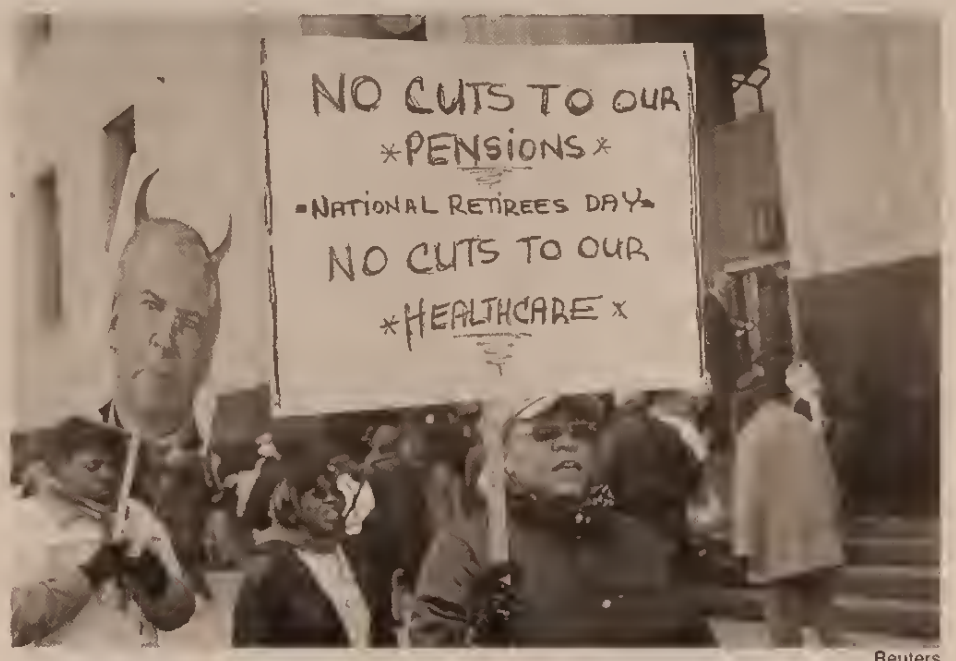
Any significant gains will be won not by making alliances with the Democrats hut by class-struggle mobilizations of the multiracial working class, particularly at relative union strongholds in industry and along the cargo chain supplying the retailers and fast-food businesses. This road also is the one that can organize these workers into the unions as part of revitalizing a long-weakened labor movement.

America's capitalist rulers presume that they can just starve the poor, kill off retirees and further impoverish working people and the oppressed without repercussions. This calculation, which owes much to the role of the trade-union bureaucracy in suppressing labor struggle, is an expression of ruling-class arrogance. The grinding down of the working masses creates conditions that can and will boil over into open battle with the class enemy. It is vital that workers break the chains forged by the trade-union misleaders that shackle labor to its exploiters.

To actually resolve hunger, homelessness and unemployment and overcome the crushing oppression of the black population will take far more than a fight for better wages. In *Capital* (Volume I), Karl Marx explained that the immiseration of the laboring masses, as well as the ever-increasing concentration of production, are inherent to the capitalist system:

> "Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolise all advantages of this process of transformation, grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this too grows the revolt of the working-class, a class always increasing in numbers, and disciplined, united, organised by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself. The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production, which has sprung up and flourished along with, and under it. Centralisation of the means of production and socialisation of labour at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated."

To realize the expropriation of the expropriators requires the forging of a revolutionary party to lead the proletariat in the fight for working-class rule. ■



Reuters

Detroit: October 28 protest against the gutting of city workers' pensions and health care outside bankruptcy proceedings.

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Subject Index...

(continued from page 12)

Capitalist Surveillance State: Everyone's a Target, #1026, 14 June (1, 2, 10)

Asylum Now for Edward Snowden!, #1027, 12 July (3)

- **Cases**—And see **Abu-Jamal, Mumia; City University of New York; Obituaries; Partisan Defense Committee; Sexuality; Transit Workers.**

San Francisco Cop Vendetta Against Protesters—Defend the ACAC 19! Drop All Charges Now!, #1015, 11 Jan. (2, 11)

AIM Leader Leonard Peltier: 37 Years in Prison Hell, #1023, 3 May (4)

Chicago: Defend the NATO 3! (CSDN), #1023, 3 May (5)

FBI's Racist "Anti-Terror" Vendetta Against Assata Shakur, #1024, 17 May (12, 9)

- **Manning, Chelsea (formerly Bradley)**—And see **Gay Rights.** See also **U.S.: International Relations.**

New York Times Disappears Bradley Manning, #1018, 22 Feb. (10)

Exposed U.S. Imperialist Crimes—Hail Bradley Manning! Free Him Now!, #1019, 8 Mar. (1, 2)

Truth-Teller on Trial: Free Bradley Manning!, #1026, 14 June (12, 8, 9)

Convicted for Revealing Crimes of U.S. Imperialism, #1028, 9 Aug. (16, 12, 13)

Donate to Bradley Manning's Legal Defense!, #1028, 9 Aug. (13)

Sentenced to 35 Years—Free Chelsea Manning! (CSDN), #1029, 6 Sept. (2)

- **Stewart, Lynne**—See **Abu-Jamal: Message from Prison.** See also **Partisan Defense Committee.**

Lynne Stewart's Life in Danger, #1017, 8 Feb. (3)

Appeal by Husband of Imprisoned Leftist Lawyer: Lynne Stewart Critically Ill—Free Her Now!, #1020, 22 Mar. (12, 10)

14,000 Demand: Free Lynne Stewart Now! (CSDN), #1024, 17 May (5)

Sadistic Feds Deny Lynne Stewart Release (CSDN), #1027, 12 July (2)

Medical Release Denied (CSDN), #1029, 6 Sept. (2)

- **Tinley Park 5**—And see also **Partisan Defense Committee.**

Chicago: Freedom Now for Tinley Park 5!, #1018, 22 Feb. (5)

Free Tinley Park Anti-Fascists! (CSDN), #1023, 3 May (5)

New Address for Tinley Park Activist, #1026, 14 June (8)

Civil Rights Movement—See **Black Question.**

CIVIL WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION, U.S.—And see **Quote of the Week.** See also **Black Question; Gun Control.**

Civil War, Not Compromise, Smashed Slavery—*Lincoln*, A Review by Jacob Zorn (R), #1015, 11 Jan. (4, 5, 7)

"Emancipation Proclaimed," by Frederick Douglass, October 1862, #1015, 11 Jan. (5, 6)

150 Years Since the Emancipation Proclamation—Finish the Civil War! (S)
Part One, #1021, 5 Apr. (6, 7, 8, 9)
Part Two, #1022, 19 Apr. (6, 7, 8, 9)

On Andrew Johnson (L), #1024, 17 May (3)

Colonialism—See **Egypt; India; Mali; Mexico; Pakistan; Quote of the Week.** See also **Italy.**

Communist International—See **Black Question; Quote of the Week.** See also **Britain.**

Communist Party (U.S.)—See **Black Question.**

Constitution, U.S.—See **Gun Control.**

Contraception—See **Woman Question.**

CYPRUS

Imperialist Bankers Strangle Cyprus, #1022, 19 Apr. (1, 10, 11)

De Blasio, Bill—See **New York City.**

Death Penalty—See **Bolshevik Tendency (BT); Rosenberg, Julius and Ethel.**

Detroit—See **Black Question.** See also **Labor.**

Douglass, Frederick—See **Civil War and Reconstruction, U.S.**

Drugs—See **Canada.** See also **New York City.**

Economy—See **Cyprus; Environmentalism; Italy.** See also **Greece.**

"Eco-Socialism"—See **Environmentalism.**

EDUCATION—And see **Black Question; School Bus Drivers.** See also **City University of New York; Mexico; Spartacus Youth Clubs.**

Budget Slashers Attack City College of San Francisco (YSp), #1023, 3 May (3, 9)

EGYPT—And see also **Turkey.**

Cliffites Disappear Their Support to Egypt's Morsi, #1017, 8 Feb. (3, 11)

Egypt Coup: Blood-Soaked Military Ousts Reactionary Morsi, #1027, 12 July (1, 7)

For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution! (W&R) (S)
Part One: The Legacy of Colonial Subjugation, #1027, 12 July (4, 5, 6, 7)
Part Two: The Bankruptcy of Bourgeois Nationalism, #1028, 9 Aug. (8, 9, 10)
Part Three: The Rise of Religious Reaction, #1029, 6 Sept. (8, 9, 10)

How Egyptian Cliffites Covered for Military Coup, #1031, 4 Oct. (3, 11)

El Salvador—See **U.S.: International Relations.**

Elder Care—See **Health Care; Mine Workers.**

Emancipation Proclamation—See **Civil War and Reconstruction, U.S.**

Energy—See **Environmentalism.**

Engels, Friedrich—See **Quote of the Week.** See also **Canada; Environmentalism; Gun Control; Mexico; South Africa.**

ENVIRONMENTALISM—And see **Canada.**

John Bellamy Foster & Co.: "Ecosocialism" Against Marxism (S)
Part One, #1032, 18 Oct. (6, 7, 8)
Part Two, #1033, 1 Nov. (5, 6, 7, 8)

Europe/European Union (EU)—See **Cyprus; France; Greece; Italy.** See also **Health Care; Syria; Turkey.**

Fascism—See **Archives of the Marxist Movement; Civil Liberties: Tinley Park 5 Case; France; Greece; Obituaries; Poland; Quote of the Week; Zionism.**

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)—See **Civil Liberties: Cases.** See also **Civil Liberties: General; MOVE Massacre.**

Florida—See **Black Question; Gay Rights.**

Food Stamps—See **U.S.: General.**

Foster, John Bellamy—See **Environmentalism.**

Fourth International—See **Quote of the Week.**

Fraina, Louis—See **Archives of the Marxist Movement.**

FRANCE—And see **Britain; Kurdish Question; Mali; Vietnam.**

Uproar Over Same-Sex Marriage (*Le Bolchévik*), #1020, 22 Mar. (8, 9, 10)

Fake Trotskyists Support Firing of Veiled Women (*Le Bolchévik*), #1025, 31 May (6, 7, 8)

Paris: Fascist Gang Kills Leftist Youth—For Labor/Immigrant Mobilizations to Crush the Fascists!, #1026, 14 June (3, 7)

European Gypsies Under Siege—French Government Crackdown on Roma, Immigrants, #1035, 25 Nov. (12, 8, 9)

FREEDOM ROAD SOCIALIST ORGANIZATION (FRSO)—And see also **City University of New York.**

Curiouser and Curiouser (YSp) (E), #1018, 22 Feb. (7)

GAY RIGHTS—And see **France.** See also **Revolutionary Communist Party; Sexuality.**

Outrage Over Anti-Gay Killing in Greenwich Village, #1025, 31 May (12, 11)

Drop the Charges Against Gay Florida Teen! (YSp), #1025, 31 May (9)

SF Pride Board Salutes U.S. Imperialism, Spits on Manning, #1026, 14 June (12, 10)

GERMANY—And see **Archives of the Marxist Movement; Britain.** See also **Obituaries; U.S.: International Relations; Zionism.**

German Trotskyists Say: No to Stalinophobic Bloc at "3 L's" Demo (*Spartakist*), #1017, 8 Feb. (6, 7)

Giap, General Vo Nguyen—See **Vietnam.**

Global Warming—See **Environmentalism.**

Golden Dawn—See **Greece.**

Gray, Kimani—See **New York City.**

GREECE—And see **Cyprus.** See also **France.**

Greek Workers Battle Austerity, State Repression (*Spartakist*), #1017, 8 Feb. (12, 8, 9, 10)*

Greek Workers... (C), #1030, 20 Sept. (3)

Greek Left, Immigrants in Fascists' Crosshairs, #1030, 20 Sept. (2)

Mass Outrage over Fascist Attacks—For a Workers United Front to Stop Golden Dawn, #1032, 18 Oct. (1, 9, 10)

GUANTÁNAMO—And see **Abu-Jamal: Message from Prison; U.S.: International Relations.**

Guantánamo Hunger Strike: Free the Detainees Now!, #1022, 19 Apr. (1, 3)

GUATEMALA

Reagan's Guatemalan Death Squad Dictator Ríos Montt: Mass Murderer, #1026, 14 June (5, 11)

GUN CONTROL—And see **Britain.** See also **Black Question.**

After Newtown Massacre: Bourgeois Hypocrisy and Gun Control Schemes, #1015, 11 Jan. (1, 9)

Revolution and the Right to Bear Arms: The Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution [*Spartacist* No. 43-44, Summer 1989 (Excerpts)], #1015, 11 Jan. (8, 9, 10)

Gun Rights and Shays' Rebellion (L), #1021, 5 Apr. (2, 3)

Gypsies—See **France.**

Hartley, Nina—See **Revolutionary Communist Party.**

HEALTH CARE—And see **Britain; China; Mine Workers; New York City; Quote of the Week; U.S.: General.** See also **South Africa.**

U.S. Health Care and the Elderly: Capitalist Cruelty, #1019, 8 Mar. (1, 4, 5)

Obamacare Puts Squeeze on Working People: For Socialized Medicine—Quality Health Care for All!, #1035, 29 Nov. (1, 7, 8)

History of the Marxist Movement—See **Black Question; Britain; Canada; Mexico.**

Holocaust—See **Archives of the Marxist Movement; Zionism.** See also **Obituaries.**

Hurricane Katrina—See **New Orleans.**

IMMIGRATION—And see **Britain; Canada; France; Greece; Italy; South Africa.** See also **Longshoremen.**

Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants!, #1018, 22 Feb. (1, 11)

Immigration "Reform": Ramping Up Border Crackdown, Guest Worker Servitude, #1033, 1 Nov. (1, 11)

Imperialism—See **Cyprus; Guatemala; India; Pakistan; Quote of the Week; Vietnam.** See also **Mexico; Syria.**

INDIA—And see **Pakistan.** See also **Bangladesh.**

Deadly Rape Sparks Mass Protests, #1017, 8 Feb. (1, 2, 7)

Clarification [Deadly Rape...], #1020, 22 Mar. (2)

On Caste and Women's Oppression in India (L), #1022, 19 Apr. (2)

International Communist League—See **Britain; Germany; Greece; Italy; Kurdish Question; Mali; Soviet Union.** See also **France; Obituaries.**

International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU)—See **Longshoremen.** See also **Oakland.**

International Longshoremen's Association (ILA)—See **Longshoremen.**

International Socialist Organization—See **Egypt.** See also **Black Question; Environmentalism; Gun Control; Immigration; New York City; North Korea; Oakland; Sexuality; Spartacus Youth Clubs; Workplace Safety.**

INTERNATIONALIST GROUP (IG)—And see also **City University of New York.**

IG Chokes on Defense of Mexican Teachers Union, #1025, 31 May (4, 5)

IG Brief for Anti-Union Drive in Mexico, #1028, 9 Aug. (6, 7)

IRAN—And see **Syria.** See also **Egypt.**

U.S. Ramps Up Killer Sanctions Against Iran, #1016, 25 Jan. (1, 8, 9)

IRELAND—And see also **France.**

Ireland's New Law: Still No Abortion Rights (*Workers Hammer*), #1032, 18 Oct. (3, 5)

Islamic Fundamentalism—See **Bangladesh; Egypt; France; Pakistan; Turkey.** See also **Iran; Mali; Syria.**

ISRAEL/PALESTINE—And see **Campus Repression; Zionism.** See also **Egypt; Iran; Syria.**

Obama in Israel: Stomping on the Palestinians, #1021, 5 Apr. (1, 10)

ITALY

Italian Elections: Austerity, Populism and Anti-Worker Attacks, #1024, 17 May (6, 7, 8)

Mass Drowning of Refugees in Mediterranean, #1034, 15 Nov. (12, 10, 11)

JAPAN—And see **China.**

Japanese Imperialism Steps Up Threats Against North Korea, China, #1020, 22 Mar. (3, 4, 5)

Japanese Communist Party—See **Japan.**

JERSEY CITY, N.J.

Yuppie Mayor Bad News for Black Youth, Labor, #1032, 18 Oct. (11)

Jewish Question—See **Archives of the Marxist Movement; Poland; Zionism.**

Johnson, Andrew—See **Civil War and Reconstruction, U.S.**

King Jr., Martin Luther—See **Black Question.**

KKE (Greek Communist Party)—See **Greece.** See also **Cyprus.**

Koch, Ed—See **New York City.**

Korean War—See **North Korea.**

KURDISH QUESTION—And see **Turkey.**

ICL Letter of Condolence to PKK, #1016, 25 Jan. (2)

Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK)—See **Kurdish Question.** See also **Turkey.**

LABOR—And see **Archives of the Marxist Movement; Immigration; Internationalist Group; Longshoremen; Quote of the Week; U.S.: General.** See also **Postal Workers; School Bus Drivers.**

Michigan Passes Union Busting "Right to Work" Law, #1015, 11 Jan. (12, 11)

Wal-Mart: Labor Bureaucracy's Non-Organizing Drive, #1021, 5 Apr. (3, 4)

Lenin, V.I.—See **Quote of the Week.** See also **Cyprus; Germany; South Africa.**

Let the Fire Burn—See **MOVE Massacre.**

Lincoln—See **Civil War and Reconstruction, U.S.**

Lincoln, Abraham—See **Civil War and Reconstruction, U.S.**

LONGSHOREMEN—And see also **Oakland.**

Longshore Unions Under the Gun, #1015, 11 Jan. (3, 11)

Union Busting Grain Bosses Up Ante Against ILWU, #1019, 8 Mar. (3, 9)

ILWU Splits from AFL-CIO, #1030, 20 Sept. (12, 11)

Baltimore ILA Tops Bow to Arbitrator, End Strike, #1033, 1 Nov. (3, 10)

LOS ANGELES—And see **Oakland; Transit Workers.**

USC: Riot Cops Raid Black Student Party, #1024, 17 May (12, 9)

Lutte Ouvrière—See **France.**

Luxemburg, Rosa—See **Quote of the Week.** See also **Germany.**

Malcolm X—See **Black Question.**

MALI

Imperialist Troops Out of Mali Now!, #1016, 25 Jan. (1, 2, 10)

Manning, Chelsea (formerly Bradley)—See **Civil Liberties: Manning Case; Gay Rights.** See also **U.S.: International Relations.**

Manning, Tom—See **Civil Liberties: Stewart Case.**

Maoism—See **China; Environmentalism.** See also **Revolutionary Communist Party.**

Martin, Trayvon—See **Black Question.**

Marx, Karl—See **Environmentalism; Mexico.** See also **Canada; Civil War and Reconstruction, U.S.**

Maximilian I—See **Mexico.**

McClellan, George—See **Civil War and Reconstruction, U.S.**

McKay, Claude—See **Black Question; Britain.**

MEXICO—And see **Internationalist Group.**

On Marx, Maximilian and Mexico (L), #1015, 11 Jan. (2, 7)

"Pact for Mexico": War on Workers, Poor (*Espartaco*), #1019, 8 Mar. (12, 10, 11)

Hands Off Mexican Teachers Union!, #1019, 8 Mar. (12, 11)

Mexico City: Brutal Crackdown on Teachers Struggle, #1030, 20 Sept. (12, 6)

Mexican Government Drives to Privatize Oil (*Espartaco*), #1032, 18 Oct. (4, 5)

Michigan—See **Labor.**

MINE WORKERS

More Capitalist Cruelty: Companies Looting Retired Miners' Benefits (E), #1020, 22 Mar. (2)

Morgentaler, Dr. Henry—See **Obituaries.**

MOVE MASSACRE

Remember the MOVE Massacre, #1025, 31 May (3)

Let the Fire Burn: A Powerful Documentary on the 1985 Bombing of MOVE, A Review by Conor Kristofersen (R), #1034, 15 Nov. (5, 6)

NAMBLA—See **Sexuality.** See also **Revolutionary Communist Party.**

Nasser, Gamal Abdel—See **Egypt.**

National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC)—See **Postal Workers.**

National Security Agency (NSA)—See **Civil Liberties: General; U.S.: International Relations.**

NATIVE AMERICANS—And see **Canada; Civil Liberties: Cases.**

Wounded Knee Massacre Site Up for Sale, #1023, 3 May (4, 11)*

Wounded Knee... (C), #1024, 17 May (3)

NATO 3—See **Civil Liberties: Cases.**

Nazism—See **Archives of the Marxist Movement; Obituaries; Poland; Zionism.** See also **Greece.**

Near East—See **Egypt; Israel/Palestine; Syria.** See also **Turkey.**

New Democratic Party (NDP)—See **Canada.**

NEW ORLEANS

Danziger Bridge Killer Cops Get New Trial, #1031, 4 Oct. (5)

New Wave Group (India)—See **India.**

NEW YORK CITY—And see **Campus Repression; City University of New York; Gay Rights; Obituaries; School Bus Drivers; Spartacus Youth Clubs.** See also **Jersey City.**

The Central Park Five and Racist Capitalist Injustice, #1017, 8 Feb. (4, 5)

Racist Koch Croaks, #1017, 8 Feb. (5)

Kimani Gray Killed in Cold Blood by NYPD, #1020, 22 Mar. (12, 10)

Stop-and-Frisk Trial and Bogus Police "Reform", #1022, 19 Apr. (12, 9)

Stop and Frisk, War on Drugs—Liberal Illusions and Racist Law and Order, #1029, 6 Sept. (3)

Brooklyn Hospital Crisis—Union Jobs, Services for Poor Under the Ax, #1030, 20 Sept. (3, 7)

NYC Elections—De Blasio: Liberal Populist Face of Capitalist Politics, #1032, 18 Oct. (12, 10, 11)

New York Times—See **Civil Liberties: Manning Case.** See also **Gun Control.**

Newtown Massacre—See **Gun Control.**

Nicaragua—See **U.S.: International Relations.**

Night Witches—See **Obituaries.**

NORTH KOREA—And see **Japan.**

Chinese Stalinists: Running Dogs for Imperialist Drive Against North Korea, #1020, 22 Mar. (5)

On the Korean War (L), #1025, 31 May (3)

Nuclear Weapons—See **Iran; Rosenberg, Julius and Ethel.**

OAKLAND—And see **Transit Workers.**

Oakland Cops: Racist Killers on the Loose, #1021, 5 Apr. (12, 11)

On Oakland, L.A. Cop Terror (L), #1028, 9 Aug. (2)

OBITUARIES—And see **Britain; New York City; Vietnam.**

In Memory of Barbara Sullivan (L), #1023, 3 May (2)

An Appreciation of Tweet Carter (L), #1023, 3 May (2)

Dr. Henry Morgentaler, 1923-2013: Heroic Fighter for Abortion Rights (*Spartacist Canada*), #1029, 6 Sept. (4, 5)

Soviet Woman Combat Pilot Fought Nazis—In Honor of Nadezhda Popova (YSp), #1029, 6 Sept. (7)

Former Panther in Solitary for 41 Years—Herman Wallace, 1941-2013, #1032, 18 Oct. (2, 3)

Ohio 7—See **Civil Liberties: Stewart Case.**

PAKISTAN—And see also **Bangladesh; U.S.: International Relations.**

Imperialism, the Cold War and the Creation of Pakistan (*Workers Hammer*), #1016, 25 Jan. (3, 9)

Palestinians—See **Campus Repression; Israel/Palestine; Zionism.**

PARTISAN DEFENSE COMMITTEE—And see **Abu-Jamal, Mumia; City University of New York; Civil Liberties: Cases, Manning Case, Stewart Case, Tinley Park 5 Case; U.S.: General.**

Free the Class-War Prisoners! 28th Annual PDC Holiday Appeal, #1034, 15 Nov. (3, 4, 6)

Peltier, Leonard—See **Civil Liberties: Cases.**

Permanent Revolution—See **Egypt.** See also **South Africa.**

Petraeus, David—See **City University of New York.**

Philadelphia—See **MOVE Massacre.** See also **Abu-Jamal, Mumia.**

POLAND—And see **Archives of the Marxist Movement.** See also **Obituaries.**

Anti-Semitic Provocation in Warsaw (*Platforma Spartakusowców*), #1019, 8 Mar. (9)

Police—See **Civil Liberties: Cases; Los Angeles; New Orleans; New York City; Oakland; South Africa.** See also **Gay Rights.**

Popova, Nadezhda—See **Obituaries.**

Population—See **Quote of the Week.**

Pornography—See **Revolutionary Communist Party; Sexuality.**

POSTAL WORKERS

Postal Workers Face Jobs Massacre, #1028, 9 Aug. (3, 12)

Preis, Art—See **Archives of the Marxist Movement; Zionism.**

Preobrazhensky, Evgeny—See **Quote of the Week.**

PRISONS—And see **Obituaries.** See also **Civil Liberties: Stewart Case.**

Hunger Strike Against the Torture of Solitary—California Prison Hell, #1029, 6 Sept. (12, 11)

Quebec—See **Canada.** See also **Obituaries.**

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

For the Communism of Lenin, Liebknecht and Luxemburg! (Rosa Luxemburg), #1015, 11 Jan. (2)

Neocolonial Slavery and World Socialist Revolution (Fourth International), #1016, 25 Jan. (2)

The Early Communist Party and the Fight for Black Liberation (John Reed), #1017, 8 Feb. (2)

In Honor of International Women's Day (August Bebel), #1019, 8 Mar. (2)

Lenin on Women's Emancipation (V.I. Lenin), #1020, 22 Mar. (2)

Defending Labor Against Capitalist Assault (Socialist Workers Party), #1021, 5 Apr. (2)

Imperialism: Monopoly Capitalism (V.I. Lenin), #1022, 19 Apr. (2)

Proletarian Revolution: Answer to Capitalist Decay (Leon Trotsky), #1023, 3 May (2)

The Promise of a Socialist Society (Friedrich Engels), #1025, 31 May (2)

Truth as a Revolutionary Weapon (Leon Trotsky), #1026, 14 June (2)

U.S. Capitalism: Racist Divide-and-Rule (George Breitman), #1027, 12 July (2)

On Bourgeois Justice (Nikolai Bukharin and Evgeny Preobrazhensky), #1028, 9 Aug. (2)

Imperialism and War (James Burnham), #1029, 6 Sept. (2)

Fascism and Capitalist Crisis (Leon Trotsky), #1030, 20 Sept. (2)

75th Anniversary of Founding of Fourth International (Leon Trotsky), #1031, 4 Oct. (2)

Medicine in U.S. Capitalist Society (James P. Cannon), #1035, 29 Nov. (2)

Religion and Capitalist Charity (V.I. Lenin), #1036, 13 Dec. (2)

Reconstruction—See **Civil War and Reconstruction, U.S.; Quote of the Week.** See also **Black Question.**

Reed, John—See **Quote of the Week.**

Religion—See **Abortion; Bangladesh; Canada; Egypt; France; Pakistan; Quote of the Week; Syria.**

REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PARTY (RCP)—And see also **Sexuality.**

Church of Avakian Decrees: No Nudes Is Good Nudes (YSp), #1020, 22 Mar. (6, 7, 11)

Nina Hartley on RCP Puritanism (YSp) (L), #1020, 22 Mar. (6)

Revolutionary Internationalist Organization (Germany)—See **Germany.**

Revolutionary Socialists (Egypt)—See **Egypt.**

Revolutionary Student Coordinating Committee—See **City University of New York.**

Ríos Montt, Efraín—See **Guatemala.**

Roe v. Wade—See **Abortion.**

ROSENBERG, JULIUS AND ETHEL

19 June 1953: The Cold War Execution of the Rosenbergs (*Militant*, 29 June 1953), #1026, 14 June (6, 7)

ROTC—See **City University of New York.**

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques—See **Environmentalism.**

Russia—See **Syria.**

Russian Revolution—See **Archives of the Marxist Movement; Quote of the Week.** See also **Egypt.**

San Francisco—See **Civil Liberties: Cases; Education; Gay Rights; Transit Workers.**

SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS

Victory to NYC School Bus Workers Strike!, #1016, 25 Jan. (12, 11)

New York City: Union Tops Sell Out School Bus Strike, #1019, 8 Mar. (3, 8)

Boston Job Action: No Reprisals Against School Bus Drivers!, #1033, 1 Nov. (3)

Boston: Reinstate Fired School Bus Union Leaders!, #1035, 29 Nov. (3, 9)

SCIENCE—And see **Canada; China; Environmentalism.**

New Spartacist Pamphlet: *In Defense of Science and Marxism*, #1036, 13 Dec. (2)

Scotland—See **Britain.**

Scott, Dred—See **Black Question.**

Scottsboro Case—See **Black Question.**

Second Amendment—See **Gun Control.**

SEK (Socialist Workers Party, Greece)—See **Greece.**

Service Employees International Union (SEIU)—See **Transit Workers.** See also **Labor; New York City; Oakland.**

SEXUALITY—And see **Britain; Gay Rights; Revolutionary Communist Party.**

Porn, NAMBLA and Bourgeois Moralism (L), #1027, 12 July (3)

State-Branded "Sex Offenders": Pariahs for Life (W&R), #1030, 20 Sept. (4, 5, 6)

On Anti-Sex Witchhunts (L), #1035, 29 Nov. (3)

Shakur, Assata—See **Civil Liberties: Cases.** See also **City University of New York.**

Shays' Rebellion—See **Gun Control.**

Slavery—See **Civil War and Reconstruction, U.S.** See also **Gun Control.**

Snowden, Edward—See **Civil Liberties: General.** See also **Civil Liberties: Manning Case; U.S.: International Relations.**

Socialist Workers Party (Britain)—See **Egypt.** See also **Britain.**

Socialist Workers Party (U.S.)—See **Quote of the Week; Rosenberg, Julius and Ethel; Zionism.** See also **Archives of the Marxist Movement.**

SOUTH AFRICA

Miners Strikes Shake Neo-Apartheid South Africa (YSp), #1016, 25 Jan. (4, 5, 6, 7, 8)

"Traditional Culture" vs. Fight for Women's Liberation (YSp), #1016, 25 Jan. (6)

New Issue of *Black History and the Class Struggle* [Introduction to *Black History and the Class Struggle* No. 23, February 2013], #1019, 8 Mar. (6, 7, 8)

Outrage Over Grisly Cop Killing of Mozambican, #1019, 8 Mar. (7)

Neo-Apartheid Police Terrorize Workers, Immigrants, Township Poor, #1022, 19 Apr. (4, 5, 9)

COSATU Labor Federation in Turmoil (*Spartacist South Africa*), #1030, 20 Sept. (8, 9, 10)

Traditional Courts Bill: Dire Threat to Women—South African Government Promotes Reactionary Tribal Leaders (*Spartacist South Africa*) (W&R), #1031, 4 Oct. (6, 7, 8, 9)

South Korea—See **China; North Korea.** See also **Japan.**

SOVIET UNION—And see **Obituaries; Pakistan; Rosenberg, Julius and Ethel.** See also **Britain; Civil Liberties: Manning Case; Egypt; France; Germany; Gun Control; Health Care; U.S.: International Relations; Zionism.**

1991-92 Capitalist Counterrevolution—Why the Soviet Workers Did Not Rise Up, #1034, 15 Nov. (2, 7)

Spartacist League/U.S.—See **Black Question; Internationalist Group; Obituaries; U.S.: General; *Workers Vanguard*.** See also **Civil Liberties: Manning Case; MOVE Massacre; Vietnam.**

SPARTACUS YOUTH CLUBS—And see **City University of New York; *Workers Vanguard*.** See also **Education; Gay Rights.**

SYC Speaker at NYC Holiday Appeal: Take a Side for a Socialist Future (YSp), #1016, 25 Jan. (7)

Join the Spartacus Youth Clubs! (YSp), #1034, 15 Nov. (9)

Stalinism—See **China; North Korea; Soviet Union; Vietnam.** See also **Black Question; Egypt; Germany; Greece; Revolutionary Communist Party.**

Stevens, Thaddeus—See **Civil War and Reconstruction, U.S.**

Stewart, Lynne—See **Abu-Jamal: Message from Prison; Civil Liberties: Stewart Case.** See also **Partisan Defense Committee.**

Sullivan, Barbara—See **Obituaries.**

Supreme Court, U.S.—See **Black Question.**

Surveillance—See **Civil Liberties: General; U.S.: International Relations.**

SYRIA—And see also **Israel/Palestine.**

Trip Wire for Regional Conflagration, #1025, 31 May (1, 10, 11)

Obama Presses for Missile Strikes—No to Imperialist Attack Against Syria!, #1029, 6 Sept. (1, 10)

Imperialists Put Off Strike on Syria, For Now, #1030, 20 Sept. (1, 7)

Texas—See **Workplace Safety.** See also **U.S.: General.**

Thatcher, Margaret—See **Britain.**

Thirteenth Amendment—See **Civil War and Reconstruction, U.S.**

Tiller, Dr. George—See **Abortion.**

Tinley Park 5—See **Civil Liberties: Tinley Park 5 Case.** See also **Partisan Defense Committee.**

Torture—See **Abu-Jamal: Message from Prison; Guantánamo; Prisons; U.S.: International Relations.**

TRANSIT WORKERS

Union Tops Call Off BART Strike, #1027, 12 July (12, 10)

L.A. Transit Bosses Threaten Workers for Body Art, #1031, 4 Oct. (2)

BART Strike Ends with Blood on Tracks, #1033, 1 Nov. (12, 10, 11)

Stop Prosecution of ATU Militant!, #1033, 1 Nov. (10)

Trotsky, Leon—See **Quote of the Week; Soviet Union.** See also **Egypt; Gun Control; Internationalist Group; Mexico.**

Trotskyism—See **Germany; Greece; Quote of the Week; Zionism.** See also **Egypt; India; South Africa; Soviet Union; Vietnam.**

TURKEY—And see **Kurdish Question.** See also **Cyprus; Egypt; Israel/Palestine.**

Mass Protests Shake Islamist Regime, #1027, 12 July (1, 8, 9, 10)

United Auto Workers (UAW)—See **Labor.** See also **Black Question.**

United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW)—See **Labor.**

United Mine Workers of America (UMWA)—See **Mine Workers.**

UNITED STATES

- **General**—And see **Abortion; Black Question; Civil Liberties: General, Manning Case, Stewart Case; Gun Control; Health Care; Immigration; Native Americans; Postal Workers; Sexuality; Woman Question.** See also **Civil Liberties: Cases; Civil War and Reconstruction, U.S.; Labor; MOVE Massacre; New York City; *Workers Vanguard*.**

Waco Massacre: We Will Not Forget, #1022, 19 Apr. (3)

As Bosses' Parties Squabble—U.S. Rulers Intensify War on Workers, Poor, #1031, 4 Oct. (1, 4, 5)

Democrats, Republicans Take Ax to Food Stamps—Capitalists Starve Workers, Poor, #1036, 13 Dec. (1, 7, 8)

- **International Relations**—And see **Abu-Jamal: Message from Prison; China; City University of New York; Civil Liberties: General, Manning Case; Guantánamo; Guatemala; Iran; Israel/Palestine; North Korea; Syria; Vietnam; Zionism.** See also **Campus Repression; Japan; Mali.**

Obama's Kill List and Imperialist Terror, #1018, 22 Feb. (1, 10, 11)

Bourgeoisie Debates Drones, Military Costs—Fine-Tuning U.S. Imperialist Terror Machine, #1020, 22 Mar. (1, 11)

Vietnam, Central America, Iraq, Guantánamo—U.S. Imperialism's Machinery of Torture, #1024, 17 May (1, 10, 11)*

Vietnam... (C), #1025, 31 May (2)

U.S. Imperialists Squirm over Exposures—Spying and Lying in the Belly of the Beast, #1034, 15 Nov. (1, 11)

United Steelworkers (USW)—See **School Bus Drivers.**

University of California—See **Campus Repression.**

University of Southern California—See **Los Angeles.**

VIETNAM—And see also **Civil Liberties: Manning Case; U.S.: International Relations.**

General Giap and the Vietnamese Victory Against Imperialism, #1035, 29 Nov. (4, 5, 6, 7)

1970 Spartacist Leaflet: "Blood and Nixon," #1035, 29 Nov. (5)

Voting Rights—See **Black Question.**

Waco Massacre—See **U.S.: General.**

Wal-Mart—See **Labor.** See also **U.S.: General.**

Wallace, Herman—See **Obituaries.**

"War on Terror"—See **Civil Liberties: General, Cases, Manning Case, Stewart Case; Guantánamo; U.S.: International Relations.**

Warsaw Ghetto Uprising—See **Archives of the Marxist Movement; Zionism.**

WikiLeaks—See **Civil Liberties: Manning Case.**

WOMAN QUESTION—And see **Abortion; Bangladesh; Britain; Canada; Egypt; France; India; Ireland; Obituaries; Quote of the Week; Revolutionary Communist Party; South Africa.** See also **Sexuality; Turkey.**

Obama's Reactionary Crusade Against Teen Birth Control (YSp), #1025, 29 Nov. (12, 9)

WORKERS VANGUARD

Workers Vanguard Subscription Drive
2013 Quotas, #1028, 9 Aug. (2)
2013 Quotas, #1029, 6 Sept. (3)
Week Two Totals, #1030, 20 Sept. (3)
Week Four Totals, #1031, 4 Oct. (2)
Final Totals, #1032, 18 Oct. (3)

Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation, #1031, 4 Oct. (9)

Workers Vanguard Subscription Drive—New Readers for Revolutionary Press, #1035, 29 Nov. (2)

Workers World Party—See **School Bus Drivers.**

WORKPLACE SAFETY—And see **Canada.**

Capitalist Profit Drive Kills—Texas, Bangladesh Disasters, #1023, 3 May (1, 11)

World War I—See **Britain.**

World War II—See **Archives of the Marxist Movement; Obituaries.** See also **Vietnam.**

Wounded Knee—See **Native Americans.**

Youth Rights—See **Britain; Gay Rights; Sexuality; Woman Question.**

Zimmerman, George—See **Black Question.**

ZIONISM—And see **Campus Repression.** See also **Archives of the Marxist Movement; New York City.**

Zionism Betrayed Holocaust Victims, Jewish Refugees, #1025, 31 May (2, 8)

WORKERS VANGUARD

2013 SUBJECT INDEX

Issues No. 1015 (11 January) through No. 1036 (13 December)

GUIDE TO THE SUBJECT INDEX

- This subject index covers issues of *Workers Vanguard* published during 2013, from issue No. 1015 (11 January) through the end-of-the-year issue No. 1036 (13 December). During this time, *WV* was published biweekly, except skipping three alternate issues in June, July and August, and skipping the last issue in December.
- The fullest listing is by SUBJECT. Subject headings are arranged alphabetically. Entries are listed chronologically with two exceptions: all entries comprising a series are listed together immediately following the first entry of the series; corrections immediately follow the relevant entry. An asterisk (*) after the page location of an entry indicates that a correction follows.
- Entries are listed under subject heads. In some cases, subject heads are broken down into subcategories. These subcategories are listed immediately after the initial subject head and preceded by a dot (•). The numbers following each entry headline give the issue number, date and page number(s) for the article. Thus:

  Gun Control British-Style, #1018, 22 Feb. (5)

  means the headline of the article, issue No. 1018, dated 22 February 2013, on page 5.
- No entry is listed twice; refer to cross-references for guidance in locating the subject head for particular articles. Cross-references are of two types: those following the word "see" deal centrally with the subject head; those following the words "see also" are related articles. Subject heads in cross-references are separated by a semicolon, while subcategories of subject heads are separated by a comma. Thus:

  Shakur, Assata—See **Civil Liberties: Cases**. See also **City University of New York**.

  means that articles about Assata Shakur can be found by going to the subject head **CIVIL LIBERTIES** and looking under the subcategory **Cases**. Related articles can be found by going to the subject head **CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK**.
- Individuals mentioned in articles are usually not a subject heading unless the article is primarily about the given person. Foreign political organizations are generally cross-referenced to their appropriate countries, while U.S. political organizations are listed under their organizational names.
- Articles relating to foreign countries are listed under geographical headings and not normally under any other subject heading. Articles relating to Israel and the Occupied Territories will be found under the subject head **ISRAEL/PALESTINE**. Articles that deal centrally with **U.S.** foreign policy will be found under **U.S.: International Relations** or under the relevant geographical heading, for example, **SYRIA**.
- Articles under the *Class-Struggle Defense Notes* (CSDN) masthead are by the Partisan Defense Committee, a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League.
- Abbreviations used in entries are:

  C: Correction

  CSDN: *Class-Struggle Defense Notes* article

  E: Editorial Note

  L: Letter

  R: Review

  S: Series

  YSp: *Young Spartacus* article

  W&R: *Women and Revolution* article
- Entries for articles that first appeared in the press of another section of the International Communist League indicate the name of the press in parentheses, for example: (*Le Bolchévik*).

ABORTION—And see **Ireland; Obituaries**.

Forty Years Since *Roe v. Wade*—Defeat the War on Abortion Rights!, #1016, 25 Jan. (12, 11)

Film Honors Heroic Abortion Providers, #1033, 1 Nov. (12, 9)

ABU-JAMAL, MUMIA

Mumia Abu-Jamal Attorneys Challenge Resentencing Process, #1021, 5 Apr. (9)

Protest Prison Harassment of Mumia Abu-Jamal! (CSDN), #1027, 12 July (2)

From Death Row to "Slow Death Row", #1034, 15 Nov. (4)

• **Message from Prison**

A Death Sentence for Defending Her Client? Lynne Stewart, #1021, 5 Apr. (9)

Guantánamo: Fear and Hunger, #1027, 12 July (2)

ACAC 19—See **Civil Liberties: Cases**.

Ad Hoc Committee Against the Militarization of CUNY—See **City University of New York**.

Affordable Care Act—See **Health Care; U.S.: General**.

AFL-CIO—See **Longshoremen**. See also **Archives of the Marxist Movement; Immigration; Labor**.

Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU)—See **School Bus Drivers; Transit Workers**.

American Indian Movement—See **Civil Liberties: Cases**.

American Postal Workers Union (APWU)—See **Postal Workers**.

American Revolution—See **Gun Control**.

Angola 3—See **Obituaries**.

ARCHIVES OF THE MARXIST MOVEMENT—And see **Black Question; Rosenberg, Julius and Ethel**.

"Warsaw Ghetto Anti-Nazi Uprising of Labor" by Art Preis, *Militant*, 6 May 1944, #1024, 17 May (2, 11)

"Who Can Save the Unions?" by James P. Cannon, #1032, 18 Oct. (2)

The Proletarian Revolution in Russia, by Louis Fraina, #1033, 1 Nov. (2)

Armed Forces—See **City University of New York; Civil Liberties: Manning Case**.

Auto Workers—See **Labor**. See also **Black Question**.

Avakian, Bob—See **Revolutionary Communist Party**.

Baltimore—See **Longshoremen**.

BANGLADESH—And see **Workplace Safety**.

Islamist Upsurge Threatens Women, Workers and Minorities—Bangladesh in Turmoil (*Workers Hammer*), #1031, 4 Oct. (12, 10, 11)

BART Strikes—See **Transit Workers**.

Bebel, August—See **Quote of the Week**.

Birth Control—See **Woman Question**.

Black Panther Party—See **Obituaries**. See also **Civil Liberties: Cases**.

BLACK QUESTION—And see **Civil Liberties: Cases; Civil War and Reconstruction, U.S.; Los Angeles; MOVE Massacre; New Orleans; New York City; Oakland; Postal Workers; Quote of the Week**. See also **Bolshevik Tendency (BT); Britain; Gay Rights; Gun Control; Prisons; Transit Workers**.

Claude McKay, 1922: Class, Race and the Black Struggle in the U.S., #1018, 22 Feb. (2)

Black Teen Jailed for Science Experiment, #1024, 17 May (3)

Gutting the Voting Rights Act—Supreme Court Spits on Black Rights, #1027, 12 July (12, 11)

Zimmerman Goes Free, Detroit Goes Under—Capitalist America: Racist Hell, #1028, 9 Aug. (1, 14)

Malcolm X on 1963 March: "Farce on Washington", #1028, 9 Aug. (13)

Zimmerman Verdict—21st Century Dred Scott Decision: There Is No Justice in the Capitalist Courts!, #1028, 9 Aug. (15)*

Zimmerman Verdict... (C), #1029, 6 Sept. (2)

1930s Scottsboro Case—Communists and the Fight for Black Liberation (includes 1932 article by James P. Cannon), #1036, 13 Dec. (3, 8)

BOLSHEVIK TENDENCY (BT)

Repeal Death Penalty? BT Votes No, #1018, 22 Feb. (4)

Boston—See **Civil Liberties: General; School Bus Drivers**.

Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS)—See **Campus Repression**.

Breitman, George—See **Quote of the Week**.

BRITAIN—And see **Pakistan**. See also **Egypt; Gun Control; India; Syria; Zionism**.

Britain 1919: Class Struggle, Racism and Labour Reformism (*Workers Hammer*), #1018, 22 Feb. (3)*

Britain 1919... (C), #1019, 8 Mar. (2)

Gun Control British-Style, #1018, 22 Feb. (5)

Margaret Thatcher Finally Dead—Iron Lady, Rust in Hell!, #1023, 3 May (12, 7)

Nationalized Health Care Under Attack (*Workers Hammer*), #1023, 3 May (6, 7, 8, 9)

Free Jeremy Forrest! Teacher Jailed in Anti-Sex Witchhunt (*Workers Hammer*), #1028, 9 Aug. (11)

Union Bashing at Scottish Oil Refinery, #1035, 29 Nov. (12, 10, 11)

Brooklyn College—See **Campus Repression**.

Bukharin, Nikolai—See **Quote of the Week**.

Burnham, James—See **Quote of the Week**.

California—See **Bolshevik Tendency (BT); Campus Repression; Prisons**. See also **Education**.

CAMPUS REPRESSION—And see **City University of New York; Los Angeles**.

Zionist Witchhunt on California Campus (YSp), #1018, 22 Feb. (12, 9)

Pro-Israel Furor at Brooklyn College (YSp), #1018, 22 Feb. (12)

CANADA—And see **Obituaries**.

Canadian Government's War on Science, Native Peoples (*Spartacist* Canada) (YSp), #1018, 22 Feb. (6, 7, 8, 9)

Canada: Racist Hell for Native Peoples (*Spartacist* Canada), #1021, 5 Apr. (5, 11)

Canadian Government Invades Union Finances (*Spartacist* Canada), #1024, 17 May (4, 5)

It's Official: NDP Drops Last Pretense to "Socialism" (*Spartacist* Canada), #1026, 14 June (4, 11)

Lac-Mégantic Industrial Murder (*Spartacist* Canada), #1033, 1 Nov. (4, 8)

Toronto Cops Terrorize Immigrants, Minorities (*Spartacist* Canada), #1034, 15 Nov. (7, 9)

No to Anti-Immigrant, Anti-Woman "Charter of Quebec Values"! (*Spartacist* Canada), #1036, 13 Dec. (4, 5)

Cannon, James P.—See **Archives of the Marxist Movement; Black Question; Partisan Defense Committee; Quote of the Week**. See also **Transit Workers**.

Carter, Tweet—See **Obituaries**.

Caste Oppression—See **India**.

Catholic Church—See **France; Ireland**.

Central Park Five—See **New York City**.

Chicago—See **Civil Liberties: Cases, Tinley Park 5 Case**.

CHINA—And see **Japan; North Korea**.

Pseudoscience, Snake Oil and Stalinism in China, #1028, 9 Aug. (4, 5, 7)

U.S./Japanese Imperialists: Hands Off China!, #1036, 13 Dec. (1, 6, 7)

City College of New York—See **City University of New York**.

City College of San Francisco—See **Education**.

CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK—And see also **Campus Repression**.

ROTC Off Campus! (YSp), #1029, 6 Sept. (6, 7, 11)

Defend Anti-Petraeus Protesters! (YSp), #1031, 4 Oct. (4)

Rescind Suspensions of CCNY Protesters! (YSp), #1034, 15 Nov. (8)

City College of New York: Reinstate the Morales/Shakur Center! Cops Off Campus! (YSp), #1034, 15 Nov. (8)

Drop Charges Against CUNY Protesters!, #1036, 13 Dec. (2)

CIVIL LIBERTIES

• **General**—And see **Guantánamo; Gun Control; Sexuality; U.S.: International Relations**.

In Wake of Boston Bombing—Ominous Display of Police-State Powers, #1023, 3 May (1, 10)

On the Lockdown of Boston (L), #1025, 31 May (3)

continued on page 9